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ABSTRACT

This study found that syllabuses and instructional supplements issued by New York State lacked the amount and kind of information essential for optimal education of African American and other minority group students in inner city schools and have a "chilling effect" on teacher initiative and creativity. The following types of documents were reviewed: (1) key general issuances of the Board of Regents and the State Education Department that set policy parameters for the entire spectrum of educational programs; (2) social studies syllabuses for grades 7 and 8; (3) language arts syllabuses for grades K through 12; and (4) State Education Department supplementary publications relating to black history. The following findings and recommendations for improvement are discussed: (1) the documents appear to adversely impact the academic achievement of African American and other minority students; (2) the content of the syllabuses does not include sufficient amounts of current demographic information about minorities and fails to capitalize on opportunities to infuse facts about minority experiences, history, and contributions; (3) many teachers of minority group students have located and developed materials to fill gaps in the State materials; (4) early intervention and assistance eases the schools' teaching burden and enhances the chances for successful academic performance by otherwise poorly prepared students; and (5) greater attention needs to be given to structured learning and informal activities. A list of 62 references is appended. (FMW)

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An Evaluation of the Strengths and Weaknesses of State Education Department Syllabuses and Related Instructional Issuances for Effective Teaching of African American Students and Other Nontraditional Students

A Pilot Study, with Recommendations

The New York African American Institute
State University of New York
State University Plaza
Albany, New York

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AN EVALUATION OF THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT SYLLABUSES AND RELATED INSTRUCTIONAL ISSUANCES FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING OF AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS AND OTHER NONTRADITIONAL STUDENTS

A Pilot Study, with Recommendations

Submitted to
The New York State African American Institute
State University of New York
State University Plaza
Albany, New York

by

VERUCH, INC.

July 27, 1988

"The slaves had only to face noneducation. Now, blacks miseducation -- a schooling experience that alienates.... The problem is that some Americans know that learning is liberating; and those who do, want to keep it an exclusive privilege."[a]

--Robert F. Engs

"We cannot be made to grow in someone else's way, or even made to grow at all. We can only grow when and because we want to, for our own reasons, in whatever ways seem most interesting, exciting, and helpful to us. We have not just thoughts but feelings about ourselves, our world, and the world outside our world. These feelings strongly affect and build on each other. They determine how we grow into the world, and whether we can grow into it."[b]

--John Holt

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FOREWORD

The New York African American Institute is engaged in a series of studies regarding the history, present and future conditions of African Americans in the State. These studies are conducted under the guidelines and with the financial assistance of the Institute.

The pilot study on "An Evaluation of the Strengths and Weaknesses of the State Education Department Syllabuses and Related Instructional Issuances for Effective Teaching of African American Students and Other Non-traditional Students," was conducted by Veruch Corporation. The principal investigators were Vernon Buck, President of Veruch and James Smoot, retired Vice Chancellor of Employee Relations and Educational Services for the State University of New York. Ms. Marlese Durr, a Doctoral candidate in Sociology at the State University of New York at Albany, designed the survey instrument and the computer program for teachers' input.

Inspired by the concern of the members of the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus of the New York Legislature about the dropout rate of African American students, the study is an intensive examination of often held hypotheses about the underachievement of African American students.

The study concludes with a set of findings and recommendations for consideration by the State Legislature, school administrators, scholars and the public at-large.

The study is issued for the express purpose of discussion, criticism, and general commentary. The Institute's main objective in issuing the report is to stimulate a dialogue which will generate an understanding of the issues raised in this study.

Dr. Florence J. Staats
Acting Director

PREFACE

The need for this pilot study was identified by members of the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus of the New York Legislature, whose concerns had been raised by reports identifying African American students as the largest component among students imperiled by ineffective schools, large numbers of which served urban areas of New York State. Their concerns also reflected queries and protests from alarmed constituents, not only those of African American background but including parents and public leaders of other minority populations whose ethnic, cultural, or racial backgrounds differed from those of the statewide predominant population.

Discussions of possible causes of poor academic performance by minority students led not only to the general consensus that many schools serving urban areas were miseducating these students but also to the particular possibility that distortions, omissions, and repressions in the teaching about the history, experiences, and contributions of African Americans and other minority populations might bear heavy responsibility for the poor academic performance of those nontraditional students. Failure to elevate the students' academic performance and achievement was seen as particularly galling in the light of the Regents Action Plan for Improving New York Schools, adopted in 1984.

Also identified as a failure of many schools enrolling significant numbers of African American and other minority

students was the lack of improvement in intergroup understanding and mutual respect among students. This shortcoming also ran counter to the Regents expectation that schools would conduct programs and activities to heighten respect for and knowledge about persons in New York's diverse population groupings.

One hypothesis evolving from discussions and deliberations on this topic was the possibility that State-issued syllabuses and related instructional issuances were inadequately guiding school curricula, course development, and instruction about African Americans and other minority populations. This hypothesis was presented to the New York State African American Institute for consideration as a research project. The Institute decided to sponsor such a project, and Veruch, Inc. designed a study which the Institute approved for implementation on a pilot basis.

This report describes the conduct of that study, the findings which emerged, and the recommendations believed to be supportable by those findings. The principal research and writing were carried out by President Vernon Buck of Veruch, Inc. and Dr. James Smoot, retired Vice Chancellor of Employee Relations and Educational Services, Central Administration of State University of New York. Each has had a distinguished career in education, including extensive research into and designing of educational programs across the spectrum of school and college levels. The survey instrument and computer program for teachers input was designed by Ms. Marlese Durr, a doctoral candidate at SUNY Albany.

Assistance in the research process was provided by John J. Stiglmeier and James F. McClendon, Personnel in the State

Education Department. In particularly Edward T. Lalor and Michael Van Ryn, cooperated unstintingly in the procurement of syllabuses and related state issuances. The Director of the New York State African American Institute, Mr. Lloyd Hogan, served effectively as reviewer of drafts and guide to further research; his staff provided support for production of manuscripts. Ms. Kathleen Guest displayed outstanding skill in converting rough drafts into finished manuscripts.

Veruch, Inc. believes that the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus served New York State well in identifying an educational need and calling for a study of ways to ameliorate that need. The Caucus also served its constituency well in taking that action. We believe that the findings and recommendations in this pilot study will be valuable in efforts by the Regents and the State Education Department to improve educational outcomes in New York State schools, not only for the African American and other minority students who are the primary concerns in the study but for all students.

CHAPTER I

THE SCHOOL AND SOCIETAL CONTEXT

As indicated in the Preface, strongly voiced concerns by constituents of New York State legislators -- as well as their own reading and observations -- led to the conceptualizing of this pilot study. Reports of the lower academic performance of minority students, their higher dropout rate, their lower college-going rate, and other indicators were numerous, especially when those reports focused on inner city schools. Equally numerous, and far more controversial, were the hypotheses and speculation about causative factors which account for the lower academic achievement of minority students.

The underlying purpose and chief focus of this study is an intensive examination of the hypothesis that one factor closely related to the underachievement of African American students in inner city schools is the impact of certain state-issued syllabuses and instructional supplements. Such an examination cannot be conducted, however, without giving due consideration to the <u>total context</u> -- societal factors such as demographic changes affecting the inner city schools and in-school factors such as the learning milieu and the quality of teaching.

This opening chapter is a digest of background research into elements of that <u>total context</u> which must be borne in mind when examining the question of academic performance of African American and other minority students enrolled in the inner city schools of New York State.

Few exhibits document better the dictum that "The more things change, the more they are the same" than an exhibit of what might accurately be considered to be the "report cards" on urban schools. If they were examined approximately two decades apart -- 1969 and 1988, for example -- would they reflect improvement warranting an "A" or a "C" or an "F"? A few examples may help in this "grading" process.

Devastating reports of conditions in many such schools currently document chillingly that conditions similarly described two decades ago have not improved. A comparison, for example, of the descriptions in a compilation by Passow in the early 1960's[1] with those in the recently released study by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching[2] will show depressingly similar pictures. The similarity raises the question, "Why?" -- Why so little progress in effecting marked improvement in the damning situation found in the 1960's, when many corrective measures were funded and installed in those schools? Consider these statistics:

Changing Times, July 1969, described the demographic picture resulting from "white flight" which left the central cities largely to the

> "...hundreds of thousands of poor people, especially Negroes, (who had) poured from rural areas, mostly in the South.... As a consequence, black enrollment in the public schools is rapidly rising.... What these children inherit as they take over city schools are conditions that seem designed to throttle education: Almost total segregation,...severe

overcrowding,...old buildings and obsolete equipment,...lack of money,...inexperienced teachers,...scanty materials (and) irrelevant courses."[3]

Problems of literacy were not restricted to the poor in urban areas, of course. In fact, a national illiteracy problem had reached such proportions in the early 1970's that a national Right to Read campaign was launched by the federal government, with programs sponsored by the Departments of Education, Defense, Office of Economic Opportunity, Civil Service, Veterans Administration, and Bureau of Indian Affairs. Most of the states offered similar programs, sometimes with financial assistance and other cooperation by major corporations. What lasting effect was recorded by this national effort?

Regrettably, the blight of illiteracy continues across the nation; it thrives among poverty-bound citizens. The "hidden problem," as some would refer to it, was brought to light in reports which multiplied after 1986, convincing evidence that functional illiteracy had not been decreasing as rapidly as the requirements for on-the-job literacy had been increasing. For example, the Language Proficiency Survey, Spring of 1985, estimated that 41 percent of the nation's functional illiterates lived in center cities. Furthermore, among native-English illiterates, 70 percent were high school dropouts; 22 percent were black; 42 percent were unemployed; and 35 percent were in the age bracket 20-39. The federal expenditure for 79 literacy-related programs was reported to have an annual cost of about $347 million.[4]

A large percentage of those deemed functionally illiterate were school dropouts. Action to decrease the number of lower school dropouts in large cities was taken in November 1987 by 32 large-city school superintendents, who issued a 75-page guide, "Dealing with Dropouts: The Urban Superintendents' Call to Action." One superintendent described the goal: "In urban school districts, as many as one-half of the students who enter ninth grade fail to graduate four years later." The number of teenagers who dropped out of school during the 1985-86 school year was placed at 682,000 -- "an average of 3,789 each day." Chester Finn, Jr., head of the Education Department's Office of Educational Research and Improvement, which had produced the booklet, agreed that the dropout problem was "acute," although he had written that its scope "may be exaggerated...(since) Census Bureau surveys indicated that 86 percent of young adults eventually acquire a diploma or its equivalent."[5]

The special plight of dropouts who are African Americans, the particular focus of this pilot study, has been described in chilling terms in The Forgotten Half: Non-college Youth in America. Some examples deserve reporting here:

> "If we focus only on the situation of young male workers, we find that those ages 20-24 experienced larger relative earnings declines than all other groups of older males. In fact, these young workers' real mean earnings in 1986 were fully one-quarter less ($8,859) than the identical age group earned 13 years earlier ($11,939, in 1985 dollars).[6]

However, the report adds:

"Reality is actually somewhat worse than the figures cited, because these earnings figures have been influenced by the growing number of males with no reported earnings: 7.3 percent of 20-24 year-old males in 1973 rising to 12 percent in 1984. Black male high school dropouts fared the worst: 14.2 percent reported no earnings in 1973 compared to 43 percent in 1984 -- a rise of 200 percent. (emphasis added).[7]

Confirmation of the harsher blow felt by minority students was issued by the federal Department of Education in January 1988. Data compiled by the department's Office for Civil Rights in its biennial survey showed that:

"Minority students were more likely than whites to be suspended or placed in classes for the handicapped and were less likely to graduate from the public schools in the 1986-87 school year.... (E)arlier surveys had also found that black, Hispanic, Asian and American Indian students were more likely to be suspended or placed in classes for the retarded.

The new survey, based on responses from 3,378 public school districts, said minorities accounted for 30 percent of the total enrollment in elementary and secondary schools. These students were 19 percent of the population in programs for the gifted and talented, 42 percent of those in classes for the educable mentally retarded, 35 percent of those considered severely emotionally disturbed, 27 percent of the speech impaired, 41 percent of those suspended, 29 percent of the learning disabled, and 22 percent of the high school graduates."[8]

Further evidence of this "lag" had been revealed a bit earlier by the Census Bureau in a report highlighting the educational background of adults aged 25 to 29. It found that "from 1965 to 1985 the proportion of whites in that age group with a high school diploma rose to 87 percent from 73 percent, while the proportion of blacks...jumped to 81 percent from 50 percent." Data for Hispanic students, 1975 to 1985, showed an increase to 61 percent from 50 percent.[9]

Although reports such as these do not coincide at the level of the actual data, they document well the fact that over the past two decades, 1965-1985, minority students -- in spite of making some gains in academic achievement -- continue to lag alarmingly in mastering the amount and kind of literacy demanded for socioeconomic success. Some of the report-compilers speculated on causes of this continued lag, as Edward Fiske, education writer, has noted: "Many educators have begun to reason...that the pool of minority college applicants could be increased if students' academic sights were raised even before they reached high school." He cited as confirmation the comment by Sarah E. Melendez, associate director of the Office of Minority Concerns, American Council on Education: "Most kids don't see college as a viable alternative until someone tells them."[10]

As these cited reports should have indicated clearly, causative factors at the school level have been postulated for examination by those concerned about achievement of minority students. Some reports have included charges of neglect of those students and allegations that the nation was "moving

backward." One such report was released in late May 1988 by the American Council on Education and the Education Commission of the States, One Third of a Nation. Among its conclusions:

> "'America is moving backward...in its efforts to achieve the full participation of minority citizens in the life and prosperity of the nation.... If we allow these disparities to continue, the United States inevitably will suffer a compromised quality of life and a lower standard of living.'"[11]

A term used previously -- the "urban education crisis" -- aptly applies to the situation in 1988 as the pilot study is being carried out. In terms of numbers, the chief victims of this "crisis" are African American students, but other minority students, economically deprived nonminority students, and, eventually, the nation at large are victims, since loss of the human potential represented by these thousands of "at risk" students deprives the cities, the states, and the nation of increasingly needed productive citizens.

Commenting on the newly rediscovered "urban education crisis" in relation to the 1988 Carnegie Foundation report, An Imperiled Generation, Albert Shanker, President of the American Federation of Teachers, cited this comment from the report of an especially depressing urban school: "There is an atmosphere of hopelessness among students, mirroring the outside world."[12]

This comment echoes a theme often expressed well by William Raspberry, syndicated columnist of the Washington Post who frequently reports on developments -- or the lack of them -- affecting schools which enroll large numbers of black students.

That theme is the "low self-esteem" often found to be characteristic among those students. For example, in a 1985 column he cited the findings of Jeff Howard, a social psychologist, and Ray Hammond, a physician, authors of a "veil-lifting discussion of the academic underachievement of black students" in an article, "Rumors of Inferiority." The authors had studied academic performance gaps in a national test (Scholastic Aptitude Test), the Florida test for teachers, and the New York City sergeant's examination. They had concluded, Raspberry reported, that "the answer has very little to do with ability and a lot to do with self-doubt, ill-founded presumptions and powerful, internalized stereotypes." In their words:

> "'The performance gap is largely a behavioral problem. It is a result of a remediable tendency (of blacks) to avoid intellectual engagement and competition. Avoidance is rooted in the fears and self-doubt engendered by a major legacy of American racism: the strong negative stereotypes about black intellectual capabilities.'"[13]

As this pilot study examines aspects of the academic performance gap among African American students, a key factor discussed in subsequent chapters is the possible effect on the self-esteem and self-image of those students traceable to state-issued syllabuses and supplements, as well as the possible effect of teacher-student interaction. In that latter regard, Mr. Raspberry notes: "Teachers, influenced by test data and other pervasive-rumors of black inferiority, tend to expect less

of black students; black students tend to accept the judgment of their intellectual inferiority and their resulting poor effort and performance fulfills everybody's expectation."[14]

A description of the societal context in which this study is being conducted must address the pressures being felt by the African American students, pressures differing in nature and scope from those impacting other students. Researchers, reporters, parents, and teachers of underachieving black students may be inadequately aware of the pressures these students must withstand. By and large, society shows little awareness of these special pressures: many adults who are, or who should be, close to them, often fail to understand them; many of their parents, themselves overwhelmed by poverty's ravages or prevented from bettering themselves due to race-based restrictions, fail to communicate with them -- or may abuse them -- so cannot provide the parental nurturing and guidance the students need. This pattern of retreat from the expected parental role often sets the stage for their children's own retreat into drugs and gangs which they believe will satisfy their needs for attachment, give them status, or meet their mobility aspirations -- and do so far faster than "schooling" will do it!

Mobility aspirations, Walter R. Allen insists, "are important variables in the status attainment process because the expectation of high status attainment represents a logical precondition to the development of attitudes and behaviors essential for the actual attainment of desired status." He

points to a longitudinal study of high school cohorts which brought a finding that "aspirations were the most accurate single predictors of eventual educational and occupational attainment" and he notes research showing that "status attainment processes among blacks are very much determined by the nature of their interpersonal experiences."[15]

The school and societal context in which this study is being conducted thus includes some controversy about the extent to which elements of the history, contributions, and experiences of African Americans should be infused into the school curriculum. The "felt need" for such inclusion has been voiced by African American students themselves, as well as by educators and researchers. Two students' felt need to take action on the subject being examined in this pilot study are representative of thousands more.

The first is a high school student who expressed this reaction to the traditional school curriculum, instructional materials and teaching. In a letter to The Crisis she said:

"To the Editor:

I just recently read (in) the December issue of Crisis...an article entitled the NAACP FIGHTS AGAINST SCHOOL DROPOUT AND TRUANCY. The article says it is to combat the dropout rate and truancy among black youths.

I am a 16-year-old Junior at Wilby High School. I have been in school for eleven years, and for eleven years I have not been taught about black contributions. I am currently in a history course entitled American History. It is the end of the

year and I have not learned about African American History because blacks are part of American History and black contributions are not in it.

I am sick of waiting because I want to know and others like me want to know. I do realize that the only way we can overcome is through education, but education is segregated. I am also in an 11th grade English course entitled American Literature. Did any blacks write books? I ask this question because I have not read one in school yet and I've been there eleven years. Don't you think a lot of young blacks want to read and learn black history? There is not even a Black History course offered in my school yet. I know many people that want to learn about it but cannot yet. A person does get mad when they hear all about white contributions and hear nothing about black contributions so eventually they start not to care.

So there is nothing wrong with your idea, but when you're talking to the students, you should also talk to the teachers and the administrators and the Board of Education so that they can change the history books and require black books to be read.

Candace E. Eggleston Waterbury, Ct."[16]

This letter has an added element of irony: In 1970, the NAACP, which publishes The Crisis as its official organ, published a 219-page "outline of history entitled American Majorities and Minorities" for secondary schools like the one

attended by Miss Eggleston. The syllabus was described as "based on existing American history courses (and) includes contributions of minorities that are not usually mentioned." Roy Wilkins, NAACP Executive Director, called it "'a complete course of study in American history...' not a supplement to the regular course.... (nor) an effort to replace white history with black history.'" The syllabus writers, Warren J. Halliburton and William Katz, had previously authored other books emphasizing minorities. The rationale for this syllabus, cited by the New York Times from the Introduction, presents these challenging assertions by writers Halliburton and Katz:

> "Historians and test writers of the past invariably favored "old stock" over immigrants and newcomers, farmers over urban workers, whites over blacks, Indians, Orientals and the middle classes (especially the suburbanites) over the lower classes. For all students this has meant a dishonest history designed to perpetuate the supremacy of officialdom.'"[17]

Our second student voice on "missing" elements in American history made a similar effort to "correct" American history, but in a different form. A news story by the Associated Press in June 1988 described how this student, a 12-year-old, had "pricked the consciences of those restoring a century-old boy, Civil War memorial" by an essay about the memorial; he had written it in 1986. The boy, Airrion Bethea, then a seventh-grader, "studied the arch and became disturbed by the absence of recognition of black participation." He said that he "had the feeling that there were black people in the Civil War (and) just

decided to check it out." The AP reported how he identified two black regiments from Connecticut which had fought in the war, learned that 24 of the regiments' 470 soldiers had been killed in battle, and discovered that 18 later died of battle injuries and 135 were wounded. His tracing of addresses identified 128 who had come from Hartford, a fact that was added to the memorial on a new bronze plaque.[18]

Actions by students such as these two seldom receive such national publicity. However, there can be no doubt that thousands of students either know or feel that American History as taught in school -- and frequently as presented in books and the mass media -- fails to include people and events deemed not to merit such inclusion. Some historians and educators long have decried the often arbitrary decision to exclude elements such as those which are the focus of this study. Those historians and educators are the second "voices" promised in an earlier section of this chapter.

The writings and speeches of these historians/educators stress two reasons for infusing more material about the contributions and experiences of African Americans into the school curriculum. First, in fulfilling responsibilities to instruct and inculcate concepts and accurate information about the nation's history and culture, schools tend to provide a slanted -- not necessarily a false -- depiction, due in part to the distortions and omissions of material about African Americans. Chapter II examines this point further.

A convincing basis for adding more African American material to the curriculum has been expressed well by Sir Arthur Lewis, Professor of Economics and International Affairs at Princeton when he wrote, in 1969, at the height of debate about "Black Studies":

> "Every black student should learn some Afro-American history and study various aspects of his people's culture.... (T)he place for him to do this compulsorily (emphasis added) is in the high schools, and the best age to start this seriously (emphasis added) is earlier, perhaps around the age of 10. (The black child) discovers that he is black around the age of 6 or 7; from then on, the whites he meets, the books he reads, and the situation of the Negro in America all combine to persuade him that he is an inferior species of Homo sapiens."[19]

Since one outcome expected from "schooling" is the shaping of a positive self-image, an inquiry into how well the curriculum meets the needs of African American students surely is justified. But another reason for the inclusion exists in the fact that non-African American elementary and secondary students need that exposure and involvement. As noted historian John Hope Franklin stated well in the First Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Lecture at the New School for Social Research, April 3, 1969, school children are likely to reflect the beliefs of "...advocates of colorless and raceless history (who) are mesmerized by the American myth of the melting pot, where all persons regardless of race, or national origin have been blended into a new human being, the American, who knows no color, race,

creed, or national origin."[20] The chapters which follow will examine this matter fully.

Complaints and direct actions by students like those described above, along with actions by civil rights advocates, educators, and others, have brought limited changes in school curriculums and instructional materials. In fact, the significant role played by black people in Southern history is receiving long overdue credit in what one report labeled "the redefinition of Southern culture." Joining in this "redefinition" are not only scholars, literary critics, folklorists, cultural geographers, and scholars of religion but also, according to Professor T. M. Davis of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, "popular magazines are featuring articles on black people and labeling the content Southern, not black, while black writers are 'claiming the region as their own.'"[21]

Professor Charles R. Wilson of the University of Mississippi contrasted the new view with that of the past, when "the essence of Southern culture was a belief in the distinctiveness of the region, which was seen as agrarian, anti-materialistic, evangelical in its religious bent, and spiritually superior to the North.... By the middle of the 20th century, that sense of distinctiveness had degenerated for some Southerners into a belief in white supremacy; for others, into guilt about slavery and segregation. For many blacks, it had led to alienation."[22]

Such a "redefinition" of the culture of a region or a nation seldom, if ever, occurs without long and bitter debate. What might accurately be called "the conservative position" tends to

oppose such change. The academic world is no exception, as the current struggle over the content of "Western Culture" courses will verify. Consequently, proposals for revising school curriculums and state syllabuses to reflect more fully the contributions and experiences of African Americans -- some of which will be set forth in Chapters III and IV -- may encounter some resistance and debate.

Debate, therefore, is a prominent feature in the total context of our schools -- sometimes bitter debate -- such as contention between citizens groups and school staff on the mission of the schools, or between school administrators and instructional staff over the best approaches to ensure the fulfillment of that mission. Pressure to improve the school's outcomes or to prove that funds have been spent beneficially appears to have brought what Edward B. Fiske, Education Editor of the New York Times, called "America's Test Mania." His comments are germane to this study:

> "The down side of this new fascination with numbers is the tail seems to be wagging the dog. Teachers complain they are under mounting pressure to 'teach to the test' -- shape the curriculum so students test well. According to school administrators, scores are being used more as political weapons than as barometers of learning."

Mr. Fiske points out, however, that some of the tests are designed to help state education officials assess the effectiveness of various curriculums, such as New York's new junior high school exams in social studies and science.[23]

Since this study will refer to causes of the academic underachievement of African American, or "black," students in urban schools, it is worthwhile to mention briefly what has been called "a fresh theory" on "a puzzling gap of about 15 points in IQ test scores, on average, between blacks and whites in America...." In summary, this theory holds that:

> "...most blacks in America are in a social position strikingly similar to other 'castelike' minorities around the world, such as the Harijans, or untouchables, of India, the Maoris of New Zealand and the Burakumi in Japan. The gap between blacks' and whites' IQ scores is similar to that between the privileged and deprived groups in each of these other cultures, education experts say."[24]

The chief proponent of this "caste" theory is Dr. John Ogbu, a Nigerian anthropologist at the University of California. His research identified these "distinctive social marks of belonging to a castelike minority": prejudice, a lack of political and economic power. Dr. Ogbu argues:

> "Being born into a castelike minority...too often leads one to grow up with the conviction that life will be restricted to a small and unrewarding set of options. The consequences for IQ test scores and school performance (emphasis added) are the same worldwide: children in the lower 'caste' suffer."[25]

This theory has not gained universal acceptance, and some critics have asserted that it merely pins a new label on what many anthropologists and sociologists have insisted for years. In the words of Professor Frederick Erickson, University of

Pennsylvania, "social status is so highly correlated with IQ that it casts suspicion on IQ scores as reflecting intelligence rather than socioeconomic status." Dr. James R. Flynn, political scientist at the University of New Zealand, who has conducted extensive research related to testing intelligence, insists that "the current worldwide disparity between privileged and deprived groups in IQ and school performance is mainly a product of environmental influences -- notably prejudice, low expectations, inferior schools and bad teaching."[26]

In succeeding chapters, this study will return to the issue of classroom materials and instruction as factors in the academic performance of African American students.

This chapter has focused on principal elements in the societal and the school context. The societal context consists of such factors as the changing demographics (shifts in population which have altered, sometimes drastically, the enrollment of urban schools), the political pressures which impinge upon the schools, the economy which affects funding of the schools, and the public demand for greater "accountability" from the schools.

The school context, about which more will be presented in subsequent chapters, consists of the students (diverse in ethnicity, background, interests, abilities), the instructional and administrative staffs (professional competence, knowledge of the diverse populations from which the students come, interest in the students), and the "ambiance" or atmosphere of the school as it relates to learning.

The overwhelming characteristic found in our research into the societal and school context, that of controversy, may be aroused still further by the chapters which follow. However, we believe that the result will be agreement on measures which can be taken to improve the urban schools and the academic achievement of African American and other minority students.

CHAPTER II

EVALUATION OF KEY GENERAL ISSUANCES OF THE REGENTS AND STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Our evaluation of key general issuances of the Regents and the State Education Department was conducted from a perspective shaped by the societal and educational context delineated in Chapter I. By "general issuances" we mean those applying to the entire spectrum of structured educational programs of grades K through 12 and, therefore, setting the policy parameters which should guide all schools providing those programs. By "key issuances" we mean those having major import in the delivery of educational programs, K-12, intended to prepare all students for successful completion of those educational programs.

Out of the delineation of the societal and educational context (Chapter I) emerged two major and fundamental questions especially germane to the examination of these key general issuances:

1. What were the implications of demographic and other changes for those officials responsible for making and implementing educational policy?
2. In what ways did those policy-makers and policy-implementors respond to the pressures of those changes?

Our evaluation of selected key general issuances must begin with the Board of Regents of the State of New York. Charged, under Article 5, section 207 of the Education Law, with the

responsibilities of policy-making, overseeing, and evaluating educational programs and outcomes at all levels, public and private, in New York State, this powerful body must be expected to display full cognizance of forces affecting, or likely to affect, the content and delivery of instructional programs in the schools. Do issuances promulgated by, or emanating from, or bearing the imprimatur of, the Board of Regents during the period 1960-1988 reflect appropriate and due cognizance of demographic changes affecting the schools?

Guidance in the Regents Action Plan

The Regents issuance of paramount import in answering this query is the PROPOSED ACTION PLAN TO IMPROVE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION RESULTS IN NEW YORK, dated August, 1983. What impressions are shaped by a scrutiny of this document?

The most striking factor emerging from study of the PROPOSED ACTION PLAN is the almost total lack of reference to major demographic changes which have affected the enrollment in many schools across the state, especially those in the "big five" urban areas. In spite of numerous references to evidence of a changing societal atmosphere requiring that schools elevate the performance of students, and in spite of calls for school linkage with community cultural institutions, parents, businesses, etc., nowhere does the PLAN note the changing demographics that have brought previously "minority" students into a "majority" position in a significant number of schools in major urban areas of the state. Additionally, the "mix" of New York residents has become

more diverse, but the PLAN fails to show due cognizance of this dynamic in material related to academic program change.

Thus, one is left with the unhappy and uneasy feeling that these demographic changes, which have brought markedly higher enrollment proportions of multicultural, multiethnic, and multiracial students into the schools, were not among the "many factors" which "influence decisions on educational standards." (p. 1, "Call to Action")

The prevailing winds in the societal climate which apparently were most noticeable or considered most worthy of response by the Regents and their educational staff were the calls for "higher standards" which would ensure "higher outcomes" in school performance and student achievement. Not even alluded to is the poor school performance in educating such culturally diverse students as those of African American background in "hard core" or "inner city" schools, the students who are the principal subject of this study.

The expectations and objectives of education are stated in laudable language; they emphasize an intent to elevate standards while ensuring access and services for students who have handicapping conditions. Since the diverse student populations whose cultural or ethnic characteristics differ markedly from those of the majority population receive no special mention as presenting special educational challenges for the schools, one must infer that they are subsumed in the category of students with learning problems requiring remedial programs. Special

arrangements for improving their educational performance are expected of the schools.

The ACTION PLAN relies heavily on strengthened standards and higher expectations as the means to increasing the schools' educational outcomes. A "requirements" tone is pervasive, including one which states that the State syllabuses will be the vehicle for instructing throughout the elementary grades (#3, p. 29). Close scrutiny of those syllabi is warranted, therefore, to assess the degree to which they address the special learning needs of African American students. The results of our scrutiny of selected syllabuses appear in chapters three and four of this study.

Another requirement stated in the ACTION PLAN is that teacher competence be measured thoroughly as part of the certification process. Thus, it becomes imperative to determine whether the certification examinations measure such qualities as these among the prospective teachers:

1. Knowledge of the state's residents whose children constitute the multicultural-multiethnic-multiracial enrollment in many urban schools;
2. The extent of information about the probable readiness of these children to meet the school's learning demands and instructional approaches;
3. Knowledge and appreciation of the history and culture of diverse population groupings comprising the likely enrollment in New York schools;

4. Cognizance of the experiences that probably have shaped the attitudes, interests, concerns, expectations, and needs of children in diverse population groups;
5. Attitudes toward people who differ markedly from the majority population in such factors as color, national origin, speech, economic status, and other factors germane in a structured learning situation.

The ACTION PLAN stresses the importance of a positive climate for learning in the classrooms. This must apply, as well, to the major atmosphere-setting element in the classroom, the teacher. Consequently, competency testing for the teachers-to-be must include attitudinal and behavioral elements as well as knowledge of subject matter. After all, as teachers like to say, "I teach students, not subjects." In short, knowledge possessed means little or nothing to students until it becomes knowledge shared, and the nature and effect of that sharing rest very heavily -- i.e., can be positive or negative -- on the tone and manner in which the teacher imparts it.

In the view of the Regents, as reflected in this ACTION PLAN, the two chief means by which the less-than-capable students are to be aided are more time and more effort. Not equally emphasized, however, is the critically imperative need for a different reward system from that which tends to motivate students whose value system and background are those of the traditional "middle class" population associated with teacher preparation curriculums in most teacher training institutions.

The relevance and validity of striving for a "different" approach which enables students to "see themselves reflected" deserves further delineation. Research shows that the psychological foundation for the assertion has been established for decades. For example, Arthur W. Combs pointed out, in 1958, that "fascinating and exciting new ways of looking at human behavior" led to the formulation of two principles having special significance for educators: (1) "People do not behave according to the facts as others see them: they behave in terms of what seems to them (emphasis added) to be so" and (2) The most important ideas which affect people's behavior are those ideas they have about themselves" [27](emphasis added).

Among Dr. Combs' particular points is one especially germane to this study: "What a person believes about himself establishes what he can and will do."[28] Applied to teachers of black children, is it not likely, then, that failure to "reach" those students is not due so much to the teacher's lack of knowledge of the subject matter as it is due to a behavioral inability, that of "translating" or verbalizing lesson material in terms which enable those students to comprehend or perceive intended "meanings"? Similarly, is it not likely, also, that a large percentage of "unresponsive" black students are literally, in Combs' terminology, "prisoners of their own perceptions"? In many instances, these are groundless perceptions of themselves as inadequate learners, exacerbated by a background-induced misperception of the verbal symbols by which the course material is conveyed. That "unresponsiveness" may well be sending an

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important "distress signal," overlooked or misunderstood by the teacher: "That's not about the world I know, or a world that's interesting to me and has meaning for me."

Optimum learning requires that the students "identify" with the teacher and the material in a learning milieu that encourages and rewards effort, thus enabling students to "explore and discover themselves and their relationship to the world in which they live." (Combs, op. cit.) Self esteem and self image as learners brighten markedly when the instructional materials depict a world or situation readily familiar to the student, when the "referents" pointed to or called up by classroom words and graphics clearly show a connection between the world of words and the world of things and events - i.e., his or her reality.

Similarly, learning reinforcement, or lack thereof, is hinged directly to the interplay of affective indicators in the teacher's word choice, tone of voice, body language, facial expression -- all of which are "read" by the student as "signals" of degrees of encouragement/rejection or praise/blame. This reliance on "affective" indicators represents learned behavior from the student's early years. Beginning soon after birth, children's observations and experiences help them learn "what works," enable them to "make it" in a sometimes alien, even hostile, world. Regrettably, for some teachers these findings from child development research have grown to be so generalized--or, when particularized and applied to children of different racial, ethnic, or cultural groupings, so stereotypic--that only

the exceptional teacher truly "teaches students, not subjects," -- i.e., takes account of and adapts to, individual differences.

This circumstance, well-documented, bodes only ill for school children from "inner city" or "core city" areas, in particular, many of whom differ greatly in learning style, learning readiness, and motivation from the "middle class" students for whom most of the school curriculum and syllabuses --as well as most classroom teachers -- have been prepared.

In view of the evidence that demographic changes have, in turn, wrought major changes in the composition and learning readiness of students in a significant number of New York schools, it must be deemed regrettable, and possibly indefensible, that the Regents PROPOSED ACTION PLAN TO IMPROVE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY RESULTS IN NEW YORK lacks a specific call for "different" approaches in the teaching of those students whose own "difference" -- cultural, racial, or ethnic -- cries out for departures from a "business as usual" approach in classroom instruction.

The PLAN states that teacher certification examinations are subject-oriented and that provisions for special education and training to improve instruction in the subjects of math and science are either in place or will be developed. One must wonder what gaps in information, what peculiar interpretation of data about demographic changes affecting the schools, can justify the absence of similar special preparation for teachers of students from critically diverse backgrounds. Such special preparation clearly is warranted and must be regarded as

imperative if the educational system is to avoid abetting the forces which have brought thousands of school children to the status of "an imperiled generation," as they have been labeled by one recently-published and now widely-cited study, AN IMPERILED GENERATION: SAVING URBAN SCHOOLS.[29]

Guidance in a State Education Department Issuance

Since the role of the Regents can be considered policy-making, rather than providing concretely-phrased, explicit directives to schools about their instructional programs and instructional approaches, the preceding evaluative comments might be seen by some as unwarranted, or excessively harsh. What impressions emerge from an examination of issuances by the State Education Department, the agency responsible for preparing and promulgating documents which guide and direct the implementation of Regents policy?

One such document was scrutinized with particular concern to learn about direct guidance of the teachers of Social Studies, the subject which will receive special attention in Chapter III. Our focus at this point is not upon course content or instructional materials but upon the likely impact of direct guidance from the State Education Department upon the classroom teachers.

The subject issuance is a "Leader's Guide" (no date) to be used in orientation sessions for social studies teachers. Its purpose is "to help school personnel implement the K-12 social studies program by enhancing awareness of this program ... (and)

provide essential information and suggested procedures needed for the effective implementation in order to comply with the Regents Action Plan."

Immediately upon reading this purpose statement, one is inclined to wish that the purpose receiving emphasis would be "for more effective learning outcomes among the students in social studies classes"! But frequent reminders leave no doubt that the ultimate goal of the program is compliance with the Regents Action Plan. Similarly reiterated is the expectation that the Regents examinations will be constantly borne in mind. This tends to give a hollow ring to those statements encouraging teachers to consider ways to be creative and flexible. Some excerpts and further elaboration may illustrate this observation.

By frequency of appearance and advantageous placement within the material, the Guide gives emphasis to mandates, reminders, and warnings rather than to ways by which teachers can meet mandates and still tailor course content and methodology in ways that tap the interests and meet the learning needs of diverse student enrollments in their classes. Anyone concerned about such students as the African American students who are the principal subject of this report can only hope that the workshops will devote extensive time to interchange of experiences compiled by teachers of classes having a majority of multicultural/multiethnic/multiracial students. This valuable aspect of orientation sessions deserves specific mention and illustration in the Leader's Guide. In the opinion of the researchers, such sharing is likely to pay a far greater dividend

than would ensue from discussion of the rationale underlying the goals of the K-12 syllabuses and being reminded, ad infinitum, of the constraints which must be borne constantly in mind.

The constricting effect of the heavy emphasis on procedures and the chilling effect of constantly-looming state examinations are heightened by the recommended schedule of unit coverage and the reminders of special tests to evaluate programs -- these in addition to the Regents exam. While many experienced teachers may regard such suggested schedules as only <u>targets</u> at which they will aim, the neophyte or less experienced teacher is likely to assume that any deviations -- longer coverage of some units, for example, or taking advantage of aroused student interest to pursue a tangential but educationally valid element -- would be made at great risk of penalty when state tests subsequently occurred: some test material might not have received the anticipated coverage, or material covered during a tangential departure from the syllabus might not be included on state tests and Regents examinations. In such instances, even the most innovative and creative departure for educational reasons may bring penalties to students and program.[30]

These observations and conclusions do not represent idle speculations; they reflect serious concerns about the extent to which a school's instructional staff will not only <u>feel</u> free but will <u>be</u> free to follow syllabus material with some flexibility. To illustrate: One of the "frequently asked questions" in Appendix A of the "Leader's Guide" is about the extent of flexibility a district has "in reorganizing, adding, omitting

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sections" of the syllabuses. The answer declares that the "State syllabus materials are recommended for use rather than mandated." However, the response is accompanied by the now-familiar reminder, noted extensively above, that "mandated state tests are based on the content, concepts and skills of State syllabuses." Consequently, one must conclude that teachers considering such departures "should carefully weigh" their decisions. This is certainly prudent advice, but it may have a chilling effect on teachers who subsequently may recognize a valid need and undeniable educational benefit in departing from the syllabus schedule or progression of units.

Teachers certainly must have ample freedom to vary the recommended approaches to teaching and covering the content in the syllabuses. A number of the course summaries suggest that an inductive, problem-centered approach would generate more interest and involvement of students having diverse backgrounds and ability levels. For example, in Grade 5 the "economic and geographic look at the United States, Canada, and Latin America" could be launched with a focus on current events such as the trade barriers among these countries, or the "wetback" laborer problem between Mexico and the USA, or the debate between the USA and Canada on "acid rain" damage. Such an inquiry approach could involve the students in collecting current news items, watching TV news programs, etc., an approach far more promising in heightened learning outcomes than would be a daily immersion in textbook material that has been generalized to fit students in many schools and many places.

Studies of schools which have lower-than-desired positive learning outcomes for their students -- prominent among which are the schools serving students in the nation's poverty-stricken areas, rural as well as urban -- have documented the fact that too many teachers in these schools follow the instructional "path of least resistance." For example, in their teaching of the history or geography of a country, they seldom seek an interest-arousing "inquiry" approach or introduce the topic from a provocative problem-centered angle; instead, they slavishly follow the syllabus-textbook route, immersing the students in material devoid of recognition features or clear relevance to their lives.

This instructional behavior stems in large measure not from lack of teacher imagination or creative capability but from doubt that departing from the boundaries set by the syllabus and textbook will allow them to fulfill the strong guidelines implicit -- and sometimes explicit -- in the state-issued syllabuses and recommended textbooks. Such doubts prevent the use of a major key to improve learning outcomes for culturally diverse students such as the African American students and other minority students in the urban schools described in THE IMPERILED GENERATION (loc. cit.) and other recent reports. That major key is freedom for the able teacher to utilize the state-issued syllabuses more as "flexlines" than as "guidelines."

Summary

Thus far, our examination of state issuances deemed critical in the education of African American and other minority students has focused on two key general publications. These have been found to be markedly deficient insofar as freeing the teacher is concerned.

As important as these documents, and others like them of a general nature, can be in the school's efforts to provide optimal educational outcomes for diverse student populations, perhaps more important for this purpose are those issuances intended to provide direct guidance to the school staff in the designing and presenting of curriculums and courses: the syllabuses. Our findings on selected key syllabuses are the subject of the next two chapters.

CHAPTER III

EVALUATION OF SOCIAL STUDIES SYLLABUSES

Background research into the educational needs of students whose racial, ethnic, and cultural characteristics differ markedly from those of the predominant enrollment group has provided a framework for evaluating State Education Department issuances germane for teaching not only the African American students, and other minority enrollments, but also teaching all students about relevant differences among the peoples comprising this nation's population. An outline of this framework would contain these points:

1. Curriculum and courses must present material which is relevant to the interests, experiences and background of African American and other minority students.
2. Curriculum and course elements likely to have negative effects on their self-esteem and self-image, two major causes of academic underachievement and failure, must be excluded.
3. Syllabus and course content on the history, contributions and experiences of African Americans and other minorities must meet stringent tests:
   a. Does it educate those students about their heritage in positive ways?
   b. Does it educate <u>all</u> students by combatting latent race-based prejudicial attitudes and behavior and by

promoting positive views about multiracial/multiethnic/multicultural diversity as a means of furthering the democratic goals of this nation?

1. Is material <u>sufficient</u> to insure against omissions of important points as well as to meet the intended learning outcomes?
2. Is material <u>appropriate</u> not only to grade level and maturity of the students but also to help build their self-esteem by its clear relevance to their background, interests and needs?
3. Is material <u>accurate</u> -- i.e., free of errors and distortions and reflecting the latest verified findings about the subject?

Using criteria outlined above, the researchers intensively scrutinized syllabuses and supporting documents for two key subject areas, Social Studies and Language Arts. Findings and comments about each of these will be presented in two separate chapters: Social Studies in this one, Language Arts in the next. Before presenting either, however, some stage-setting material applicable to our evaluation of both syllabuses will be presented here.

The basic reason for examining syllabuses is like that underlying our examination of the Regents Action Plan in the preceding chapter: to determine the extent to which they call for, and set parameters for, educational adaptations to meet the educational needs of the markedly diverse student enrollments

resulting from major demographic changes in the schools, particularly in New York's major urban areas.

Our evaluation of syllabuses spotlights and appraises the manner and extent to which they provide guidance specifically for classroom instruction. In addition to some general reactions, the content which follows will point out specific elements of the syllabuses and present illustrations and suggestions of material which, in the opinion of the researchers, would enhance the quality of the syllabuses as guides for the purpose stated above.

On this count, one of the researchers' conclusions should be stated at the outset: Neither the statements of the Regents goals for the subject, which appear in each syllabus, nor the Education Department's descriptions of outcomes that are expected from the course emphasize the importance of tailoring the educational programs to meet the special needs of African American and other students from nontraditional backgrounds.

A critical defect observed in the syllabuses was the tendency to "send mixed signals" concerning the extent to which curriculum and course content must follow charted paths and the extent to which teachers could depart from the course timetables and suggested content without deleterious effect. (This observation has been described at some length in discussing the Department's issuance, "Leader's Guide," in Chapter II, so no further elaboration appears necessary.)

The researchers' general evaluation of the syllabuses for two Social Studies courses and the Language Arts Program K-12 is that

they confirmed the hypothesis underlying this pilot study, namely, that issuances guiding school instruction of and about African Americans have defects warranting corrective action. Measured by the criteria set forth on the preceding page, the syllabuses were found wanting in two major ways: (1) Gaps in information about African American history and contributions were identified; and (2) Opportunities for incorporating activities and assignments to enhance learning by all students about African Americans had not been utilized. Details supporting these conclusions appear in the sections which follow.

Because the Social Studies syllabuses have been published as one document, evaluative commentary applicable to both will be presented first. Comments and suggestions applicable to a particular syllabus will then be presented in separate sections.

Syllabus for Our Cultural Heritage (Grade7) and United States History (Grade 8)

Worthy of note at this point is the fact that the two Social Studies syllabuses selected for close scrutiny were deemed important to this study for three reasons:

1. Each course seemed likely to afford numerous opportunities to include material on the history, contributions and attainments of African Americans;
2. Students in these courses were likely to be at a critical age for shaping attitudes and behavior affecting their relations with other students whose backgrounds differed markedly; and

3. History and heritage courses provide excellent opportunities for identifying -- and, hopefully, correcting or ameliorating -- students' lack of information, or misinformation, about people of other cultures and backgrounds.

Equally worthy of note is the fact that our review of these syllabuses did nothing to dissuade the reviewers from concurring with critics who have charged that the school social science course -- to express it in the words of Professor James A. Banks, University of Washington at Seattle - "frequently reflects the norms, values, goals and ideals of the powerful groups in society; it often validates and legitimizes those beliefs and ideologies which are useful for powerful groups and are detrimental to oppressed peoples."[31]

These critical words apply to the syllabus reviewed, not so much because of what it contains but because of what it does NOT contain. This finding is applicable to both courses in the syllabus, as will be illustrated in the following paragraphs.

The "Introduction" section of this combined syllabus delineates well the objectives of the social studies curriculum for all grade levels and sets forth a pedagogical rationale which the researchers judge to be sound and appropriate to achieve those objectives. However, one definition appearing in the Introduction was striking for its being violated numerous times in the course syllabuses: "Concept" was accurately defined as "usually abstract, as opposed to concrete," but the list of "concepts" appropriate for introduction or development

in each "Topic" of each syllabus often contained "concrete" terms which would have to be rephrased (adding "-ing," e.g.) to be considered "concepts."

Viewed in light of its date of origin, 1965, the syllabus' minimal material about African Americans may be understandable, since that approach was "normal" for that era in education. Viewed today, however, after two decades of research and revision related to African American history and experiences -- along with a sharp rise in the proportion of "minority" students enrolled in urban schools -- the syllabus material for Grades 7 and 8 falls disturbingly short in presenting adequate material about African American history and experiences of Black Americans. Some details are incomplete; others are inaccurate or misleading. To illustrate:

1. The list of topics to be studied regarding the Reconstruction period contains none on the role and contributions of Blacks in national as well as local and state government; nor is there reference to their contributions in education, e.g., in the Freedmen's schools and local public education. One listed topic, "carpetbaggers," prompts the researchers to hope that instructional materials will present revisionists' research findings which document <u>positive</u> contributions made by some who bore that label, thus amending the traditionally negative stereotyped teaching about "carpetbaggers."
2. The term, "cultural" apparently has an atypical meaning as used in "Cultural Heritage," since the material features a

heavy dose on the structure of N. Y. government, local and state, in contrast to a slight treatment accorded to major heritage topics. Consequently, the people become obscured by the structure, and the "discovery" approach to learning has rough going against the fact-loaded material on government. The rationale for this emphasis is that it "gives evidence of the importance of political institutions," although with an acknowledgement that material on government "could ... be entirely integrated" within the sequential topics of the two courses. The researchers suggest that such an integration would add interest to the governmental structure material.

For direct assistance to revisers, we offer the following examples of opportunities to infuse material about African Americans into the syllabuses. (The plural is used because some suggestions apply to the Grade 7 syllabus, as well.)

Suggestions for Our Cultural Heritage:

Topic 1: The Pre-Columbian Period

The rationale for focusing on New York's Iroquois Indians as the sole topic is commendable. The approach is equally applicable for study of African Americans, if it were added as one of the "optional studies" recommended on page 10.

Topic 2: New World Exploration and Settlement

1. Material could be added to show that among participants in explorations by the French, Spanish, and Portuguese were black explorers, as well as black servants and slaves.
2. Material on the subjugation of surrounding Indian tribes by the Aztecs (p. 12) affords the opportunity to remind the students -- or inform them, if the concept has not been introduced earlier -- that slave-taking has a long, if not an honorable, history among mankind. This should make it easier to discuss the sensitive topic of slavery in the United States when that becomes timely.

Topic 3: The Colonial Period in the Americas

1. The introductory paragraph offers a good point at which to begin inserting material leading to the topic of slavery. The colonists not only "gained experience and confidence in their abilities to manage their own affairs ..." but also grew ambitious to expand their crops and holdings to a point requiring laborers. Among these, not far over the ocean horizon, were slaves; brought to supply forced labor, they became a key causative factor for the Civil War.
2. The topic's chart of economic patterns shows slave-holding only in the South (p. 17); for accuracy, slavery's presence and economic benefits must be shown as existing in the North, as well, including New York.
3. Page 18 lists slaves as household servants as well as fieldhands. An accurate listing would show them also as craftsmen, since many attained that status sufficiently not

only to "manage" small plantations but also to be "hired out" by their owners, who allowed them to retain part of their earnings -- with which some bought their freedom and, in some instances, their family's, too. Furthermore, accuracy calls for notation (p. 18) of the growth in demand for slaves and consequent growth of the slave population as the agricultural economy grew in importance and value.

4. It is valid -- and critical for understanding the institutionalizing of slavery, with its subsequent nourishing of racist attitudes, beliefs, and behavior -- to describe the structure of the slave family and the valuable role played by the "mammy" in the plantation family (p. 18).

5. "Religious patterns" (p. 18) offers an excellent opportunity to add the notation that religious beliefs were a "refuge" for slave-holders (and others), who "justified" their treatment of African Americans by reference to biblical passages which, in their tortuous reasoning, accorded lower status and less than full human rights to blacks people.

6. Material on education (p. 20) offers an entry point for noting that slaves were largely barred from structured schooling, had to learn a new language on their own, and were punished for trying to learn to read and write. Note also should be made of the fact that the "mammy" often was the "tutor" for the informal education of the owner's children as well as her own.

7. Opportunities for further exploration of the African American experience appear in the "Optional Studies" and "Concepts" listings on p. 22. For example, to the former could be added "Slavery in History" and "Conditions on Slave Ships"; to the latter could be added "Resistance to Oppression," using material like that in THE BLACK PERSPECTIVE (to be reviewed in Chapter V) and focusing on resistance of slaves on slaveships as well as on plantations.

Topic 4: New York in the Emerging Nation

Material about slave-holding and the status of blacks in New York could be added at several points. Research by New York college and university professors subsequent to the 1970 publication date of THE BLACK PERSPECTIVE has revealed important material germane to this topic.

Topic 5: New York in the Age of Homespun

In spite of a brief entry (p. 37) concerning "gains" made by blacks during this period, and in spite of documentation in the Department-recommended BLACK PERSPECTIVE, this topic does little to show the persistence of slavery and the contributions of slaves to the growth of the state's economy during this era. Surely worth adding is material on not only slaves' contributions but also on the severe restrictions that were placed on African Americans in New York until the end of the Civil War. A topic such as "Slavery in New York" could be added to the "Optional Studies" listing (p. 38).

Topic 6: New York in Glided Age

As true for Topic 5, material pertaining to African Americans in New York State deserves inclusion in this section as well. For example, the growth of city populations included Blacks migrating from the South and the stated "need to integrate diverse peoples" surely was caused, in part, by black presence in the cities. It is justifiable, therefore, to propose that a topic such as "Blacks' Northern Migration" be added to the list of "Optional Studies" (p. 45). Interesting studies could result from contrasting the assimilation of immigrants into an urban socioeconomic situation which made little room for African Americans. The teacher might be wise to lead discussion of such "sensitive" topics as racial restrictions in housing, hurdles faced by blacks who sought membership in trade unions, and local or state restrictions on blacks.

Topic 7: New York in a Megalopolis Society

This complex and demanding topic includes changes which exacerbated the socioeconomic problems faced by urban African Americans. The syllabus seems to "gloss over" these complex problems and gives practically no attention to the special situation of blacks. For example, the reference to increased white collar workers fails to note the corresponding <u>decrease</u> of employment opportunities for unskilled and little-skilled workers such as blacks and some white immigrants. Similarly, the allusion to a growth in proportion of persons dependent on public welfare attributes the change to an increase of "in-

migrants from the South and Puerto Rico and the movement of the middle class from the city" -- with no reference to the principal causes: loss of manufacturing jobs for unskilled workers, an inadequate educational system, and race-based restrictions on trade union membership. Topping this "oversight" is the statement that "The majority of the people remaining in the core city lack the political ingenuity or interest to solve the complex problems of the city." Such "blaming of the victim" is inexcusable in the syllabus intended to guide the teaching of extremely complex subject matter to young people in a course whose objectives are to inform and shape attitudes for civic responsibility!

To summarize: Our review of the syllabus for Our Cultural Heritage has found numerous opportunities for infusing germane important material about African Americans. When read outside of the context of the full syllabus, these suggested infusions may appear to be too numerous or too extreme; however, we firmly believe that they will never be found to be unwarranted! At least three assumptions have undergirded their inclusion in this report:

1. that agreement on the NEED and the VALUE of such infusion will be reached;
2. that teachers will be motivated to seek materials for this infusion, with support from the Education Department; and
3. that the infusion will result in a greatly enriched learning experience for the students and a more enlightened arrival at the follow-up course, United States History.

Evaluative comments and suggestions about that course now will be presented.

Suggestions for United States History (Grade 8):

As noted in our comments about Our Cultural Heritage, the separate handling of United States History, some of whose elements inevitably appeared in the preceding course, results in a repetition which invites boredone. Also somewhat numbing, in the researchers' opinion, is the approach used to trace U.S. history: Although the syllabus states that it aims to permit teaching in an interdisciplinary, inductive mode, it emphasizes fact-oriented material on government and seems to place inordinate stress on names and dates rather than on the IDEAS which deserve being traced and emphasized in a course designed to promote "patriotism and civic responsibility," a goal stated in the syllabus.

Akin to our experience in reviewing the Cultural Heritage syllabus, again we discovered numerous opportunities for warranted infusion of material about African Americans. This would result in a more accurate and more complete depiction of their place in United States history as well as a promotion of the concept of civic responsibility and the important feelings of self-worth. Examples follow.

Topic 1: The New Nation (to 1800)

1. Listings of actions taken by the Congress and the colonies against England (p. 71) should make note of the contributions made by black Americans, as well as those of

foreign personages, in the ensuing war effort. For example, blacks volunteered for service in the militia and the army (as is now evident in exhibits at Saratoga National Park), although they were not always readily accepted for duty.

2. Research has shown that a major topic of controversy, and eventual compromise, at the Constitutional Convention was the handling of the slavery issue. Material on page 74 accords inadequate attention to the slavery controversy, so amendment of that material is warranted. This admittedly will be a difficult topic for the teacher to handle: it requires dealing with what historians have called, in the words of historian Winthrop D. Jordan, describing the actions of the Convention participants, "a monstrous inconsistency when they insisted on liberty for themselves while denying it to a largely black group in their very midst." [32]

Eighth Grade teachers of United States History may feel that this "paradox" in American History and government will be too complex and too "disturbing" for comprehension by the students. Since the phrase, "All men are created equal," is likely to have been stated and reiterated to those students in earlier grades, it may be asking too much that they hear and discuss a description of this paradox, such as the following, quoted from an article by Levesque and Baumgarten:

> "It was and remains a paradox central to the American experience not only because the

> men who came together to found an independent United States either held slaves or were willing to join hands with those who did. The centrality of paradox goes beyond antithesis; slavery, as it developed in the United States, was more than the antithesis of freedom. Slavery, the ultimate denial of freedom, was reserved for a single group -- those with black skins; moreover, the loss of freedom was almost certain to last a lifetime, and the condition was heritable. These special circumstances, ... unique to the black population, imbued the loss of freedom with a distinctive psychological dimension. Those enslaved lost far more than their physical freedom: they had become non-persons."[33]

The "sensitivity" of this topic is awe-inspiring, but, in view of the persistence of problems having their core in this paradox (racial unrest, poor human relations, confrontations, etc., no strange matters for today's school populations), it seems imperative that teachers find positive ways to include this "paradox" and its aftermath in these two important courses for young people who must cope with vestiges of this "monstrous inconsistency" in American History.

3. To the "Optional studies" list (p. 76) should be added the topic, "Constitutional Convention Debates about Slavery," offering an excellent chance to enhance student interest by having the 'debates' enacted by students."

Topic 2: The National-Republic Period (1800-1825)

Suggestions made for the Grade 7 syllabus material on this era -- such as the growth of slavery and the harsher restrictions on blacks, non-slave as well as slave -- deserve to be added to this portion of the Grade 8 syllabus, as well.

Topic 3: The Age of Jackson (1825-1840,s)

1. The growth of reform, which saw a consonant rise in antislavery agitation in parts of the North but a hardening of resistance in the South, affords many opportunities to infuse <u>positive</u> material about contributions of blacks to the abolition movement and other aspects of American life.
2. The syllabus phrasing in this section "waters down" the evils of continued slavery and the diverse approaches of abolitionists. Stressing the "compromises" which enabled slavery's expansion elsewhere, while it was <u>partially</u> abolished in the North, relates only part of what was actually happening to most African Americans at the time. In addition, this downplaying of the evils perpetrated against the blacks may be taken by some teachers as a "signal" that they need not expose the students to such atrocities as maiming and killing of blacks, <u>not all of them slaves</u>! Amending the "Optional Studies" list (p. 89) by adding such topics as "Variations in Treatment of Slaves," "Restrictions Faced by Non-Slave Blacks in America, " "Lynch Law Justice," "Treatment of Slaves as

'Property'," and "Three-Fifths-of-a-Man Voting Rights for Blacks" would give teachers the message to teach more realities about African Americans.

Topic 4: Division and Reunion (1800-1850's)

1. The syllabus material in this section serves satisfactorily as an "overview" of the period but it copes poorly with a dilemma faced by the teacher determined to present an accurate delineation of the issues related to slavery. That dilemma is how to reveal to students the findings of what has been called "revisionist" scholarship, which depicts some views on the handling of the slavery issue that call into question the versions students are likely to have learned earlier. One such oversimplified view is that the chief goal of the Civil War was to bring "equal rights" for blacks in America. Levesque and Baumgarten (op. cit.) summarize that "revisionist" finding in these words:

"The revisionist scholarship of the Civil War and Reconstruction periods has convincingly demonstrated that the bold revolutionary aim of racial equality, the so-called 'third war aim,' was a myth; the outbreak of the Civil War actually increased the virulence of Northern and Midwestern racism, for it opened up the prospect of an inundation of both areas by fugitive and liberated slaves. The primary war ends then were the preservation of the Union, and the destruction of the institution of slavery.

In the eyes of Abraham Lincoln, and the other anti-extensionists, slavery was a 'vast moral evil' -- Lincoln's phrase -- not because it degraded Negroes, but because it was a blight on the American experiment in popular government and a genuine threat to the preservation of the Union and to what the Union represented and symbolized throughout the world." (p. 22)

The syllabus (p. 90) does allude to the fact that the Civil War failed "to secure the blessings of liberty for all Americans" -- i.e., "we failed to complete the task." The ambiguity of this oblique reference to equal rights for slaves may be a way to "ease into" the "sensitive" matter of race relations as a factor figuring heavily in that war, but the syllabus phrasing should be far more direct, and its material more inclusive, in addressing the slavery issue -- even at the eighth grade level.

2. Reference is made (p. 91), for example, to "stable class-conscious social order" in the South, but no mention is made of the equally deep-seated <u>race-based</u> social order which consigned to black Americans a status still restricting their freedom and rights, as the syllabus infers in its oblique phrasing, "another century ... before we took up this task again in earnest." One might add, "with blacks providing the impetus"!

3. Although teachers must be expected to present sensitive material in a palatable manner, this hardly justifies the unqualified statement (p. 91) that "The slave question ... appeared to be 'settled forever' at intervals following

1789," unless the syllabus writers meant that such a view might have been held by optimists uninformed about the true nature of the compromising on the slave question at the Constitutional Convention. The statement (p. 92) that "many(?) Southerns had deplored slavery" earlier but later defended it seems excessive -- depending, of course, on one's definition of "many." The syllabus does make clear that such attitudes hardened as years passed and secession neared.

4. The syllabus' estimate of the comparative strengths of South and North for the war effort (pp. 94-95) needs at least two amendments to the North list: (a) The North did have "more people," as noted, but not all supported the war effort to, as they saw it, "free the slaves," as, for example, the New York draft riots (July 1863) and similar opposition elsewhere confirm; and (b) not listed among the human resources of the North (perhaps because not all lived in the North?) were the fugitive slaves and other blacks (eventually numbering about 200,000--ca. 15% of the force) who fought on the Union side.

5. The syllabus might well note that even in parts of the North -- Ohio, for example -- Blacks were rejected as soldiers. Dr. Felix James describes the rationale presented by then Governor, William Dennison: "Although he was against the extension of the institution (of slavery), he was not willing to accept the freed blacks as soldiers ... because of the state's law and sentiment

against the use of blacks as soldiers.... Ohio's 'crusade was to save the Union, not to free the slaves or dignify the blacks.'"[34]

6. To achieve greater accuracy, the syllabus should amend its material on the Emancipation Proclamation (p. 97) to reflect realities such as these: (a) the Proclamation actually freed only the slaves in the slave states; (b) too much credit may be accorded to President Lincoln, in light of the reinterpretation of his true aim (noted above) and in view of the fact that, prior to signing the Proclamation, he had revoked emancipation orders issued by two of his generals; and (c) a notation that the Proclamation did far exceed his earlier proposals for gradual emancipation over a 37-year period, administered by slave states, with compensation to slave owners and the colonization of freed slaves.
7. Another amendment warranted by historical evidence is to add to the list of causes of "negligent actual effects" of the Proclamation (p. 98) the fact that southerners immediately developed and implemented harsh countermeasures against blacks to restore and insure "white supremacy."
8. Strangely missing from the list of topics for study on the Reconstruction period (p. 98) is the role and contributions of blacks in government, education, and other socio-economic aspects students should know about the period.
9. The list of "Optional Studies" topics (p. 99) needs amendment to add such topics as "Blacks in Congress," "Rise

and Tactics of the Ku Klux Klan," "Blacks in Local Government during Reconstruction," "Status of Blacks in the North during the Civil War and Reconstruction," "Schools for the Freedmen," and "Foreign Views of the Civil War."

10. Deserving a place among the "Concepts" (p. 100) are these abstractions: "Disenfranchisement," "Tenant Farming," "Restrictive Laws," and "Race Relations."

Topic 5: Economic Expansion (1865-1900)

1. The content and emphasis of this section leads one to ask," Did the Civil War really happen?" Although the teacher might allude to that era of strife in a "bridge" statement leading into this new topic, the researchers believe that the syllabus should focus at least briefly on the war's aftermath. Questions come to mind: (a) Were the "nation's wounds" fully "bound up" for healing or merely "salved"? (b) Is the purpose of this section to provide a mini-economics course? A number of vestigial <u>social</u> problems are buried in shallow graves beneath the rhetoric of economics topics such as money and banking and the growth of the monied class.
2. A problem both economic and social, that of the depressed status of the farmer, is introduced (p. 102) but not developed in the syllabus. In view of the fact that farmers continue to face such problems as being "largely at the mercy" of bankers and others -- including New York dairy farmers, as well -- further assistance for the

teacher is warranted in the syllabus. Among the rural poor would appear the blacks in the South who, in the words of Joanne Grant, suffered increased pressures from the white Southern "Redeemers":

"... all the methods which are now familiar were brought to bear. In addition to murder and physical torture, economic pressures were employed. Negro landowners lost their land through chicanery; tenant farmers and share-croppers were trapped in an endless debt to a white landlord, a system of peonage was introduced whereby Negro prisoners were rented out by the county to work off sentences and fines."[35]

3. The outrages experienced by black Americans who were trying to eke out a living on their plots of land paled in comparison to the "ultimate penalty," death by lynching. Grant places the number known to have been lynched between the years 1882 to 1927, for example, at 3,513.[36] The shocking nature of this brutality has been chronicled well by Ralph Ginzburg in 100 Years Of Lynchings[37], using actual newspaper accounts. Oddly, the syllabus accords this topic no mention in this section, which encompasses the period when "lynch law" gained major headway. Nor does the Ku Klux Klan rate coverage! These are serious "oversights" warranting corrective action.

4. Literally driven from the South out of desperation for a livelihood and their lives, Blacks migrated to the North in record numbers. This "promised land" proved to be nearly as hostile as the South: some cities rejected them

outright and atrocities, including lynchings, occurred in the North as well as in the South. Although the syllabus describes problems faced by immigrants in the cities, as well as their exploitation in "company towns" where they worked as miners, the African American seems to have disappeared from the scene as described in the syllabus! Surely their continuing problems -- as well as the nation's problem of "unfinished business" left from the Civil War -- deserves at least a brief note in the discussion of Economic Expansion.

5. To the "Optional Studies" list (p. 109) should be added: "Race Riots," "Immigrant 'colonies,'" and "Urban Black 'Ghettos.'"

6. The expansion described in this section establishes another "generalization" deserving inclusion on the list, p. 109: "Economic growth is borne on the backs of cheap labor."

7. The perception of America as the "land of opportunity," which accounts for the "flood" of immigrants and, in part, for the trek to the North by Blacks, was "extolled (by) White Americans who ... did not have blacks and women in mind," notes Clyde C. Griffen, adding that, "female achievement was discouraged and remained exceptional, and so, like that of blacks, invisible in the literature of success."[38] In view of later agitation for the equal rights of women and blacks, the syllabus might give a modicum of attention to it in this section.

Topic 6: The United States A World Poiwer (1900-1940)

1. Material on page 111 listing internal problems caused by "bigness" might well mention social problems which were becoming "big" in the cities, as described on succeeding pages.
2. The syllabus phrasing in relation to the reception accorded immigrants (applicable, as well, to blacks from the South) is puzzling: Is the phrase, "were not warmly welcomed by those already there," intended to be a "softening of reality" for "tender ears" or a tongue-in-check understatement? The complexity and severity of the social dynamic in this mixing of ethnic and racial groups seems to warrant stronger phrasing, such as "were opposed, sometimes strongly, by those already there."
3. The founding of the NAACP receives due listing as one result of the "Progressive Era," but the absence of any apparent problem underlying its conception invites the inference that "progressive reforms" spawned the NAACP! Some indication of the agitation preceding its birth is wise, as well as at least brief mention of black-sponsored predecessors such as the National Afro-American League in 1890.
4. Again, the word choice in the syllabus description of "danger signals" presaging the "bust" to follow "boom" years of growth seems to present a harsh reality in the form of "pap": "many were living far beyond their means" surely is true, but <u>many more</u> lacked even the means!

Mention of the growing -- but apparently unseen -- "underclass" should occur with other indicators on page 115.

5. To the list of "Optional Studies" should be added: "Black Nationalism," "The Garvey Movement," and "Strikes and Countermeasures by Industry and the Government." (p. 117)
6. "Concepts" worth adding (p. 117): "Segregation," "Integration," "Assimilation," and "Miscegenation."

Topic 7: The United States A World Leader (1940-Present)

1. The necessarily sketchy "overview" of this tumultuous period gives ample opportunity for the teacher to augment the syllabus skeleton with material about the status of blacks. Guidance would be provided by adding the Civil Rights Movement to the list of factors affecting the Truman, Kennedy, and Johnson administrations.
2. The syllabus gives no indication, per se, of the active role of African Americans in its listing of events which showed "long overdue progress in civil rights for Negroes" (p. 125). Consequently, the teacher's material and presentation bears the burden of shaping student impressions of the roles of blacks: victims? agitators? recipients of white-provided relief from oppression? "black power" grabbers? Each of the listed events could be presented in a manner evoking empathy and understanding of one's civic responsibilities or generating antipathy and resentment of the "special treatment" received by blacks, a

view held by a significant number of young people who lack the perspective afforded by history. The syllabus should provide guidance on the manner of presentation as well as the events to be covered.

3. To the list of "Optional Studies" (p. 125) should be added: "African Americans in the Armed Forces of World War II" and "Countermeasures to the Civil Rights Sit-ins and Other Pressure Tactics."

4. Another "generalization" (p. 126) emerging from this section is this: "Social change requires the heat of protest."

Topic 8: The Federal Government and Civic Respinsibility

This section summarizes adequately the elements and facts which should be known for fulfillment of one's civic responsibility. Again, however, the syllabus omits reference to African Americans by the words chosen to describe (p. 129) the need fulfilled by the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth amendments: "to deal with some of the problems of the Civil War and Reconstruction"! The researchers wonder if ambiguous phrasing such as "deal with" and "some of the problems" is typical "social science-ese" or a device deliberately adopted to deemphasize the relationship of these key amendments to the status of African Americans. We recommend that the phrasing be made more specific.

To summarize: Since the actual writing of this 1986 reprint apparently is 1965 (Foreword, p. iii), coverage of events

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To summarize: Since the actual writing of this 1986 reprint apparently is 1965 (Foreword, p. iii), coverage of events

involving, or particularly affecting, African Americans -- for better or worse -- subsequent to 1965 is notable by its absence from the syllabuses for Our Cultural Heritage (Grade 7) and United States History (Grade 8). Consequently, the researchers have little evidence of the extent to which augmenting classroom presentations -- if any -- by the teacher or other persons would result in a more accurate depiction of African Americans' history, experience, and contributions.

We assume that teachers will have acquired or developed materials not only to cover the post-1965 period but also to augment these syllabuses along lines suggested in this chapter. One state-issued supplement, the long-used, familiar Black History Month: A Reflection and Recognition of the African American Family (Revised January 1986) provides useful material, including suggestions for the teacher. (This supplement is reviewed in Chapter IV of this study.) More may be revealed about teachers' approaches to the post-1965 era in Chapter VI, based upon a survey sampling of social studies teachers in selected cities of New York.

Our summary conclusion is that these social studies syllabuses need major revisions in order to remove errors -- primarily of omission -- and to increase content about African American history, culture, and contributions as well as to deliver a clear message to teachers about the relevance and importance of such materials.

CHAPTER IV

EVALUATION OF LANGUAGE ARTS SYLLABUSES

In Chapter III, State-issued syllabuses for Social Studies, Grade 7 and 8, received special attention not only because of their critical position in the education of students about their fellow Americans but also (1) because they offered prime opportunities for teachers to inject material about African American history, culture, and contributions and (2) because they afforded excellent openings for the direct discussion of, and teaching about, multicultural populations and the importance of combatting prejudicial attitudes and behavior which are pervasive in our society and possibly latent in the students themselves.

For quite similar reasons, Chapter IV of this pilot study focuses on another curricular area, the Language Arts and its adjunct, Literature. Two state issuances will be examined: English Language Arts Syllabus K-12 and Reading and Literature in the English Language Arts K-12. Special place has been accorded this area of the curriculum because the language arts are absolutely critical in the academic advancement of the culturally diverse students who are the primary concern of this study. In addition, the language arts have great potential for educating all students about the experiences, culture, and contributions of African Americans, a missing ingredient in much of the traditional curriculum provided for American students.

Two particular values possessed by the language arts and literature give them the educational significance credited here.

The first value is that of helping students attain the skills in communication -- writing, speaking, listening, writing, thinking -- which are basic to mastery of subject matter as presented and required in most every school curriculum and course. Learning to comprehend and to manipulate language -- which, essentially is a structured symbol system-is imperative for successful study in such computation-oriented courses as mathematics, chemistry, and physics as well as in such verbal-oriented courses as English, social studies, and history.

The second major value of the language arts-literature combination is that of affording for the teacher the opportunity to teach, through indirect methods, such humanizing concepts as respect for the individual, loyalty to worthy causes, or courage to survive adversity. More accurately stated, the teacher does not "teach" these values so much as "set the stage" for students to learn for themselves as they read about characters in literature with whom they can identify, or project into fictional or nonfictional accounts the events of their own lives. Where the direct approach might encounter resistance -- e.g., in discussing the ravages that can be caused by prejudice -- an indirect approach, such as discussing a scene from a play or an event in a short story, can help students "see" (realize) the harm done to someone through biased attitudes and behavior.

A central theme emerging from studies of schools where students in large numbers have been found to be "at risk" of

dropping out or failing the academic programs is that a "business-as-usual" approach to curriculum planning, course design, and teaching -- among other improvements -- can no longer be afforded by our schools and our society. Special measures are required. This note was sounded by the State Education Department's number two official, Executive Deputy Commissioner Robert Maurer, when he recently resigned from that position. He gave as one reason for resigning his inability to "convince the state Board of Regents to accept many of his proposals," one of which was the "development of a special five-year high school program for students who are at risk of dropping out". Without in any sense endorsing Mr. Maurer's recommendation, the researchers for this pilot study firmly believe that "different" approaches must be taken, as was stated in our evaluation of the Regents Action Plan to Improve Elementary and Secondary Education Results (Chapter II).[39]

Since failure to cope successfully with the verbal demands of school has been cited in numerous research reports as the major barrier to academic achievement among urban African American school children, reading improvement will serve well to illustrate taking "different" approaches in teaching. Students' academic performance indeed does depend very heavily on their skill in reading -- i.e., comprehending the thought, information, etc., intended to be conveyed by the words arrayed on pages. More competence is required than merely word recognition or gleaning "surface" meaning: background information is needed to obtain the fuller meaning and import of

the words and phrases -- at times, not only the verbal context but also the societal context, the psychological context, and the situational context -- must be examined and understood to comprehend the meaning and import. The verbal context consists of the words surrounding a particular word; the societal context is the "meaning" given to a word by the societal users of it; the psychological context is given to a word by the user's tone of voice, facial expression, or body language; the situational context is the particular happening or event in which a word is being used.

The importance of possessing this background information for mastery of critical reading has been expressed persuasively by columnist William Raspberry, who frequently writes about the problems and achievements of black students and reports on research findings germane to the problem. For example, quoted the following from E. D. Hirsh's Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know,

> "'To grasp the words on a page, we have to know a lot of information that isn't set down on the page ...,'"

then Mr. Raspberry writes:

> "That insight, in my view, explains why inner-city youngsters, who often read at or near national norms in the first three grades, tend to fall farther and farther behind their national peers as they progress through the grades. It isn't that their word attack skill declines, or that their teachers fail to teach 'comprehensive skills.' The problem is that they lack too much of the knowledge the authors assume they possess."[40]

The importance of this point for black school children he underscored by quoting Orlando Patterson, black Harvard historian-sociologist, who asserts,"'...blacks will be condemned in perpetuity to oversimplified, low-level tasks and will never gain their rightful place in controlling the levers of power unless they also acquire literacy in this wider cultural sense.'"

Assuming the validity, relevance, and rightness of these observations, how can such deficiencies in reading backgrounds be ameliorated and eradicated?

Dr. Ruth Love Holloway, then director of California's Bureau of Compensatory Education, gave an experience-based answer in 1974, when she was chosen by U. S. Commissioner of Education, Dr. Sidney P. Marland, to "salvage" the national Right to Read Program:

"...(R)eading problems spring from multiple causes and ... demand multiple approaches and solutions ... The schools (are) geared to the middle class and not really able to teach reading to children who varied from this limited 'norm.' Blacks and other minorities were seen as 'culturally deprived' or 'culturally disadvantaged,' meaning there was something wrong with them and their culture and environment and not with the schools and their educational processes."

She added:

"...(U)ntil very recently, publishers did not produce instructional materials for non-white, non-middle class non-suburban students. Black, Native American, Hispanic, and other cultures were often ignored, omitted or distorted in

instructional materials and this neglect had a debilitating impact on the self-concept and achievement of black and other minority students. If you don't see yourself reflected in what you are about in the classroom...that has a major impact on reading."[41]

Whether African American, and other minority students, "see themselves reflected" in the literature used by their schools is of critical concern to the researchers. Since the likelihood that schools <u>will</u> give special attention to the needs of these students would be increased if state syllabuses emphasized the need to do so, the researchers have critically examined those syllabuses. Especially strong is our concern about those students enrolled in schools serving depressed, long-term poverty-encased urban areas of New York State.

The need for special attention to the education of these students, as well as the record of minuscule success by those schools in meeting it, has been documented, deplored, and denounced in numerous studies. Representative of the findings is this one by Charles Silberman:

"The failure is not new: it is one the United States has tolerated for a century or more. The public school never has done much of a job of educating youngsters from the lower class or from immigrant homes...

It is not only the 'commonness' of the common school that we have exaggerated, however; we have also greatly romanticized the role the schools have played in stimulating social and economic mobility for immigrant and native-born

lower-class people. For some groups, to be sure--the Japanese Americans, the Greeks, and the Eastern European Jews, in particular -- the schools have been the critical means of mobility, and so have served to enlarge the democratic base of society. But these really were exceptions -- ethnic groups whose cultures placed a heavy premium on individual achievement." (p. 54)

Silberman presents studies which show that for most immigrant groups -- "the Irish, the Poles, the Slaves, the groups which comprised the bulk of the immigration of the middle and late nineteenth and twentieth centuries" -- mobility cannot be attributed to schooling. For the children of such families, he points out, "the schools never did learn how to be effective...: they remained institutions in which these youngsters felt alien and estranged." (p. 60)[42]

What Silberman reported concerning the schools' failure to enable upward mobility for Negroes, Indians, Mexican Americans, and Puerto Ricans is almost identical today, with a very limited number of exceptions where a combination of school reform, dedicated personnel, and special funding have demonstrated what COULD be done but most often is <u>not</u> done.

In view of the indisputable finding that mastery of the language arts establishes the nucleus or core element around which mastery of other school subjects must center, it is imperative, in probing for explanations of the unacceptably high failure and dropout rates among school children of the urban poor, that we critically scrutinize State syllabuses which guide

the development of language arts curriculums and courses. How well do those syllabuses address the special problems and needs of these students?

English Language Arts Syllabus K-12 (1987)

This encompassing syllabus makes explicit the expectation that local school districts will develop programs which achieve the Regents Goals for Elementary and Secondary Education. The researchers assume, therefore, that this expectation will be fulfilled by designing curriculums, courses and supporting programs especially tailored to meet the needs of the school's enrollment -- i.e., variations which reflect the multiracial/multicultural/multiethnic diversity among students enrolled in that particular school.

Apparently, each school's administrators and other curriculum developers are assumed to be ably equipped for this special tailoring obligation and expectation, since the syllabus provides little direction on analyzing local needs. However, in "Characteristics of an effective...curriculum," page 19 and following, are included abundant general recommendations which permit teachers to adapt reading and speaking assignments to meet students' interests and needs. Consequently, literary works by African American writers and the speeches of African American leaders could be studied; issues especially affecting African American students could be reported on, discussed, and debated; and classroom activities could include oral readings and enactments drawn from African American literature. Thus, the

general guidance in this overarching syllabus seems quite acceptable. Whether the second syllabus, Reading and Literature in the Language Arts, provides examples to help teachers implement this guidance will be the focus of succeeding paragraphs.

The English Language Arts syllabus strikes the researchers as being excessively general in its guidance. For example, a more concretely and strongly phrased statement underscoring the importance of involving students in reading, speaking, and writing about people of other cultures would support the Regents' advocacy of multicultural education. The general statements (pp. 162 and 166, e.g.) SHOULD foster actions in all schools to ensure the use of readings about and by people of all cultural, racial, and ethnic populations in the USA -- whether represented among the school's enrollment or not. However, such general statements should be accompanied by a reminder that SPECIFIC action was to be taken.

A praiseworthy step in that direction appears as Purpose I in the "Chart of Expectations," pp. 123ff: "Enjoying and appreciating text, relating text to self, developing sensitivity to diverse social, historical, and cultural dimensions." Here, then, is an open invitation to build courses tailored to particular enrollments. Equally strong statements of expectations are set forth in other sections of the Syllabus for Language Arts K-12. Thus, the researchers conclude that this syllabus has pointed well the general direction teachers should take and has delineated adequately the expectations of the

Regents. How well a companion document, what might be called the teacher's manual, carries to a finer degree of concreteness and specificity the general guidance noted above will be the focus of the next section.

Reading and Literature in the English Language Arts K-12

The "Introduction" essentially restates a section appearing in ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS SYLLABUS K-12. The aim of the publication is stated succinctly and cogently; the rationale for the recommended approach to the study of language is pedagogically sound ("...to assist educators in designing programs"); the benefits of the integrated approach (listening, speaking, reading, writing) are delineated clearly; and the expected outcomes for students are reasonable and appear to be achievable. This supplement, a companion volume for the Language Arts syllabus, has clear applicability to content area subjects as well as the language arts program. Although the emphasis falls on comprehension-centered reading, the role of literature receives ample exposition.

The Introduction includes no indication that the educational implications of the demographic changes which have impacted the central city schools' enrollment have, in turn, caused changes in the Language Arts syllabus. Will closer examination reveal content aimed at the typical learning challenges awaiting the language arts teachers in these urban schools? That examination follows, with evaluative comments. The margin section headings replicate those of the document itself.

The Reading Process:

The process of reading is described adequately as an act whose outcomes depend upon the cumulative effect of three interacting variables: the reader, the text, and the task. These variables have the potential for hindering as well as assisting the reader's effort to derive meaning from the words. The document emphasizes the importance of the reader's experience, knowledge, skills, and abilities in the reading act, and it lists some suggested activities which the teacher can adapt to assist "developing readers toward greater independence" and the status of "skillful readers."

Regrettably, no definition of "developing readers" occurs, and the advice on activities applicable to them is quite general and brief. The ultimate goal of reading ("the joy of reading" and "pleasant associations which will lead to a lifetime of appreciation of books") will be deterred for students whose reading abilities have not advanced beyond the "developing" stage, or whose experiences with classroom reading are unpleasant, or whose life experiences, interests and needs do not appear to be addressed by the chosen or assigned reading material.

To elaborate further: The probable success of one key activity -- discussion of experiences related to a topic which arises spontaneously or is introduced into a class session -- would rest heavily on the likelihood that the students have had such experiences. Thus, when designing courses and choosing instructional materials, the teacher must have a reliable

working knowledge of the experiences likely to be occurring, or which have occurred, in the students' lives. Descriptions of the classroom teachers in schools across New York State indicate convincingly that many, if not most, are woefully lacking in knowledge about life experiences of the African American students, and other culturally diverse students, from "core" or "inner city" areas of New York's major urban populations. Consequently, it is imperative that the syllabuses and companion issuances such as teacher's manuals provide specific guidance on (1) the need to enlarge acquaintance with such populations and (2) how this should be done. If a school's population is to be well-served, and if the "multicultural" dimensions of the State-recommended curriculums and courses are to be conveyed, then the school faculty's training and orientation sessions must feature presentations about diverse urban populations.

Providing a Strong Foundation for Literacy:

READING AND LITERATURE'S depiction of children at the school entry point is that of traditional middle class children: e.g., "command of expression includes complex sentences; curious about the written appearance of their own language"; ready to discover concepts (time, space, size); able to count, identify letters, retell events; etc. Studies leave no doubt that this depiction shows inadequate awareness of many entering poverty-level minority students who will comprise the majority enrollment in many urban schools. Consider, for example this description of

such children from James S. Coleman's survey, EQUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY, 1965:

> "...Coleman's work confirmed previous studies (emphasis added) showing that even before they enter school black children perform far less well on standard tests than (do) white children. The typical black 6-year-old in the urban north (emphasis added), for example, scores below five-sixth of all white 6-year-olds on tests of both verbal and nonverbal ability. These tests obviously measure performance on tasks which seem important to educators and psychologists, not tasks which seem important to the children being tested or most of their parents. But...(the tests) provide a fairly accurate indication of how well any particular cultural group is likely to do at such 'white-middle-class games as reading and long division. In the case of poor black children, the tests predict disaster.'"[43]

This description might be dismissed as "dated," especially in view of major educational programs targeting, in particular, urban school children during the interim since 1968 -- e.g., Project Head Start or the More Effective Schools programs. Regrettably, as recent critical document convincingly (See, for example, A NATION AT RISK, 1983; AN IMPERILED GENERATION: SAVING URBAN SCHOOLS, 1988; and THE FORGOTTEN HALF: NON-COLLEGE YOUTH IN AMERICA, 1988), the "report card" on urban schools still shows "low marks" for most of the urban schools which provide the educational offerings for most of the students about whom this study is concerned -- and thousands like them.

THE FORGOTTEN HALF reports, for example, that "Fifty-six percent of black youth live in central city areas where the dropout rate is far higher than the 20 percent national estimate in 1983." In addition, "in 1985, 43 percent of all black children 18 and under lived in poverty." The educational situation among Hispanics is described as equally bad in terms of poverty's effect (a 40 percent poverty rate among children and youth under age 18) and was compounded by language barriers.[44]

In the face of this bleak picture, one must doubt the outcome for these children of the optimistic projection in READING AND LITERATURE that "a curriculum rich in language, experience, and literature" will provide "an abundance of meaningful situations in natural contexts." But one must add an "unless" when doubting such a projection: "unless the literature rich in language and the experiences to which it refers are drawn from and deal positively with the lives, hopes and needs of these children." One more provision must be added: the instructors who present this literature must be deeply aware of the experiences likely to be called up by that literature, as well as knowledgeable about the handicaps some of the children will face in "interpreting" that literature along the lines "expected" by the manual and the teacher.

The manual expresses a likelihood that children entering kindergarten will display a varied range and depth of experiences; consequently, teachers will have to develop activities especially designed to enlarge the experiences of

some of the students. To aid those whose "book experience is limited," the manual recommends a rich variety of classroom opportunities to associate printed material with spoken words. Repeated experiences of history, storytelling, dramatizing stories, and handling books are ways by which limited experience can be enriched; use of jingles (as in rope-jumping), chants, and rhyming poems also <u>will</u> build language and word association skills, the manual advises rightly. However, some of the suggested activities do not envision the limited opportunities available to central or inner city school children, such as visiting a book store or attending a book fair during either school or non-school hours. Again, therefore, the teacher's interest, energy, and commitment will be tested to fulfill the manual's expected outcomes.

<u>Word Identification's Role in the Reading Process</u>:

The material in this section consists of technically valid explications of principles underlying a fundamental aspect of learning to read. As such, it should prove to be extremely valuable for the teachers. This value, however, will be realized only if the teachers bring to their use of this section some prior knowledge of the technical processes of "contextual," "structural" and "phonic" analysis. Comprehension would be aided by fuller definitions and more numerous examples, preferably varied by grade level <u>and</u> by probable reading <u>background</u>. More explicitly, an example drawn from reading material used in the first three grades, another from the next three grades, etc., would improve the teachers' comprehension of these key elements.

Similarly, some examples draw from readings about urban life would reinforce for teachers the importance of tailoring instructional materials to fit the diverse populations likely to be enrolled in their classes.

Expectations for Student Readers K-12:

The purposes, objectives, and focus skills (behaviors) are delineated in such general language that teachers will have to develop specific applications to their classes and the students in them. The listed activities are typical of classes (teacher-student interaction, e.g., or group discussion); some (e.g., students read books that "can serve as reflections of their own lives") point directly to the need to ensure that course readings are chosen with the students' interests, background, and needs as major criteria--fully as applicable to reading for aesthetic and personal response as to reading for acquisition, interpretation, and application of material. The document rightly notes that "materials used must evoke interest and curiosity"; this, in turn, requires that the teachers possess a rather full knowledge of the children's background experiences. Some schools may find that their instructors have a paucity of such knowledge.

Some teachers also may lack experience in handling disagreements, verbal or otherwise, which cannot only disrupt the class but also rupture relationships among otherwise friendly students. For example, discussion of a sensitive, controversial reading such as "Ancient Black Civilizations" in the book, Malcolm X on Afro-American History,[45] could generate

heated discussion of racism or arguments about freedom to express divergent views. The alert, creative teacher can capitalize on such discussion to promote tolerance of others and to encourage supplementary reading. To do so is worthwhile, even at the price of a risky departure from the syllabus content and suggested course schedule. Teachers must be encouraged and enabled to take such initiative without fear of the chilling effect of tight parameters set by the syllabus or the school administration.

Literature in the English Language Arts Curriculum:

Predictable statements about the benefits of "pleasurable encounters" with books characterize this section, such as the elevation of taste "for quality literature" and the "limitless opportunities for making connections between language and experience" Also cited as laudable goals for the literature are those of learning "to appreciate their own heritage, respect the heritage of others, and become sensitive to ... stereotypes." These benefits would accrue more readily for students in our multiracial/multiethnic/multi-heritage/multicultural urban society if the readings chosen for all school curriculums and courses -- to the full extent generously feasible -- included such works about the conditions of African Americans as THE SOULS OF BLACK FOLK by W. E. B. DuBois, ROOTS by Alex Haley, A RAISIN IN THE SUN by Lorraine Hansberry, A CHOICE OF WEAPONS by Gordon Parks, and THE FIRE NEXT TIME by James Baldwin. Similar works by

and about people of other culturally diverse minority groups should be included, as well.

Such action -- for K-12 students across the state -- would enhance chances of attaining the Regents' laudable goal of "...ability to understand and respect people of different race; sex; ability; cultural heritage; national origin; religion; and political, economic, and social background, and their values, beliefs and attitudes." Without exposure to diverse literary selections depicting experiences of people representative of these differences, the goal will remain no more than mere abstractions.

The manual rightly points out that the activities of reading aloud and storytelling have validity and value from kindergarten into secondary classes. Since literature <u>is</u> dialogue -- i.e., an author "speaking to" readers -- these activities can lead naturally into student responses, oral and written, in which they express their own ideas, feelings, experiences, and beliefs. Questions and challenges from the teacher and classmates can promote efforts to improve language use or to find support for one's views by reading to acquire further information. Such interaction and response from teacher and classmates is essential for developing improved study patterns in a student.

Communication being a two-way process, the student communicator <u>must</u> detect a response -- hopefully the desired one of approval, but, if not, then any other except rejection and disapproval -- from readers and listeners. The manual provides pragmatic guidance on ways to promote students' response to

literature and how to capitalize on and steer their interpretations of literature -- but it is advice which has been designed for traditional middle-class students whose responses and reactions are assumed to be "typical" of the "average" student. That the enrollment in "inner city" schools is not "average" or "typical" of the enrollment in the same grade levels across the nation or across New York State does not appear to have been considered by the writers of this document. Since such enrollment has increased not only in the "inner city" schools but elsewhere, expanding into the fringe areas of the cities and into some suburban areas, it seems reasonable to expect that the manual would have beneficially added an admonition that a proportion of children -- a major proportion in schools serving depressed areas -- may display a response pattern unlike that assumed by the writers, hence, one requiring creativity by the teacher.

This response is not the clearly threatening unruly disorderliness which has received much publicity at times and which indeed presents a challenge in some schools. Even more challenging for the teachers of many children in the early grades of the poorest urban schools will be a form of blame-acceptance, resignation, or docility which defies the teacher who has planned for a lively response to literature or some other presentation. Jonathan Kozol, a writer who taught in "ghetto" schools for a time, described these children "who gave in to their teachers most easily and utterly" as "the saddest" among the students. The way they dealt with dilemmas, whether

caused by the school's deplorable physical environment or strangers as substitute teachers or a perplexing class task, "was to blame, not the school but themselves." He writes:

> "You could not mistake the absolute assumption that this mess was not only their own fault but something to be ashamed of. It was a triumph of pedagogical brain-washing .... the children found it natural and automatic to accept as normal the school's structural inadequacies and to incorporate them, as it were, right into themselves, an indictment... of their own inadequate mentalities or of their own incapacitated souls.... The result of this atmosphere was that too many children became believers in their own responsibility for being ruined; and they themselves, like the teachers, began somehow to believe that some human material is just biologically better and some of it worse."[46]

Echoing this two decades-old description is the comment quoted from AN IMPERILED GENERATION, the 1988 report by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching:

> "...after nearly five years of intense reform efforts, what we've done has been 'irrelevant to many children -- largely black and Hispanic -- in our urban schools.... There is an atmosphere of hopelessness among students, mirroring the outside world.' The kids can hardly mistake this message of what society thinks of them and expects them to accomplish'"[47]

Will a closer look at the course content described in this manual show more awareness of this special challenge than has been evident so far?

Content of a Reading and Literature Program K-12

The reading/literature teachers quickly will discover that a traditional "menu" of course content is offered, but it is one into which a creative teacher can infuse readings by and about African Americans and others of the multicultural enrollment in our urban schools. This action assumes, of course, ample teacher awareness of the possibilities and ample determination to act accordingly, since doing so will be fully in accord with the Regents' support of multicultural education. In short, such infusion would benefit not only the minority students themselves but also the nonminority students, whose knowledge of the culture, history, and experiences of minority people is abysmally meager.

Every category of the reading/literature charts, pp. 63-71, affords opportunities for a "natural" infusion of readings by and about African Americans, the minority group which is the primary focus of this study. The teacher who is determined to take this action will find librarians ready allies in compiling and choosing appropriate material. Some examples will illustrate the availability.

Fiction

Picture Books: One benefit of the civil rights movement was the publication of school books showing greater "presence" of African Americans. Although some books are no more than the previously published stories with added illustrations showing blacks and other minorities, others have been highly rated for their accuracy in depicting what has been called "the black experience" in America. Still others have won awards for layout and illustrations as well as content. The school librarian and school district learning resource specialists can aid in this compilation.

Folktales: Excellent for their simple story line, and sometimes their contribution to learning about life, these, as the manual indicates, continue the oral literature tradition and reveal "the values and beliefs of a culture." As the manual also states, these can reveal "the contributions of different cultures to our own society." A rich source of such folktales is African literature, as has been documented by Jacob Drachler (among others), selector and editor of the Library Journal-recommended AFRICAN HERITAGE.[48] This anthology of Black African Personality and Culture contains delightful folktales which children will enjoy.

In addition--and in the nature of an "aside" to the main thrust of this report--Mr. Drachler, long a student of African life and literature, presents a cogent and compelling point worthy of inclusion here. Commenting on the tendency among many

people, including international experts, to regard Africa as an "underdeveloped" nation, he writes:

> "...the basic trouble with the well-intentioned concept of 'underdevelopment' is that it tends to ignore the deeper, more moving concerns of life: attitudes toward work, play, love, children; responses to nature and death; use of traditions and wisdom. 'Underdevelopment' tells us nothing about laughter, poetry, wonder, worship. In short, it treats man in his <u>having</u> and not in his <u>being</u> (emphasis added)."

Literature by and about the "minority" group called African Americans, like that by and about other "minorities" in our multicultural society, can enrich the learning experiences of all students. Consider, for example, the topic of mistreatment of a people by other people--African Americans by white Americans in the institution called slavery, for example, or European Jews by the Nazis in the holocaust. How a people survive such terrifying technique is to reverse or sublimate the effect of this ordeal by turning it into humor, as Daryl Dance of Virginia Commonwealth University has described so well in "Wit and Humor in the Slave Narratives." The narratives, he notes, "were usually intended to serve in the cause of abolition." Some school textbooks and supplementary readings include such narratives to convey to students the form and characteristics of slave life.

However, Dance adds, some of the narratives provide "moments of relieving laughter," relief from memories of "the private hell of oppression,... the bitter beatings, degradation, and humiliation,

the brutal murder of loved ones, and the separations from mothers, wives, and children...." Ensuring that students understood how relief could be derived from laughing about such recollections would be difficult, of course, as in this example:

> "'They say that slaves are happy, because they laugh, and are merry. I myself and three or four others, have received two hundred lashes in the day, and had our feet in fetter; yet at night, we would sing and dance, and make others laugh at the rattling of our chains. Happy men we must have been! We did it to keep down trouble, and to keep our hearts from being completely broken: that is as true as the gospel. Just look at it, -- must not we have been very happy? I have done it myself -- I have cut capers in chains.'"[49]

The danger of using such an example, of course, is that students may consider it further proof of the stereotypical view that African Americans enjoyed slave status. However, the teacher skilled at guiding discussion will make certain that the essential point, man's adoption of various tactics to endure punishment and deprivation of rights, will emerge from the discussion. Parallels in their own handling of similar situations -- on a lower order of ordeal, of course -- can be drawn from discussion, a valid learning experience.

Examples of literature in other classifications on the chart are abundant in the works of African American writers who describe, directly or indirectly, the culture and experiences of African Americans. Historical fiction, realistic fiction, drama, poetry, biography, journals, essays -- all of these genre

are represented among the creative works of African American writers. Although the bibliography at the end of Reading and Literature does not list specific works by African American writers, the following listed titles may guide teachers to works by those authors:

Glatthorn, Allan A. A GUIDE FOR DEVELOPING AN ENGLISH CURRICULUM FOR THE EIGHTIES, Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1980.

Moss, Joy. FOCUS UNITS IN LITERATURE, Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1984.

However, since most of the listings deal with the teaching of literature, teachers who need assistance in selecting literature by and about African Americans should consult the school librarian and the curriculum coordinator.

Strategies for Nurturing the Reading Process

Wisely, the manual cautions that the suggested "strategies models" be used with due regard for the students' reading level; hence, careful selection of literature appropriate to that level also is advised.

Monitoring Guide for Picture Books (Grade 1-3)

Surprisingly, students in these early grades are asked to "read" picture books for "critical analysis and evaluation." They are expected not only to "evaluate the quality of the selection" by applying "criteria for evaluating informational, persuasive, and literary materials" but also to "provide

evidence to support their opinions of the book." If the aim truly is to initiate students into the nuances and complexities of evaluation, then the manual writers assume not only far greater acquaintance with such books, and a consequent pre-school formulation of evaluative criteria, than is likely to exist among most children entering these grades in schools serving depressed urban areas.

However, this strategy does have some applicability -- properly handled -- to elicit reactions ("What did you like about this book? Does it describe events you've seen or that happened to you? What did it make you think about as you looked at the pictures?) which can become the starting point for formulating evaluative criteria. Unless teachers concentrate initially on these children's emotional response -- as opposed to their "intellectual" response (i.e., applying evaluative criteria as yet unknown) -- the essential value of nurturing the pleasure of reading will be lost. In sum, developing a critical "taste" for quality reading requires the establishment of a student's personal basis of pleasurable reading. Extensive foundation-building is likely to be required for children entering schools serving depressed urban areas, since the breadth and depth of their reading is likely to be narrow and shallow at school entry time.

One's reaction at this point in the manual might be expressed in that old saw, "the cart seems to be before the horse." This thought occurs especially as one notes that the strategy for Grades 4-12 focuses on "Reading for aesthetic and personal

response," the approach we suggested for beginning readers. First-graders need not be introduced to the term or the concepts of "aesthetics," to be sure, but eliciting their personal response is crucial before introducing "critical analysis and evaluation." Obviously, those terms are not intended to have the subtleties and nuances applicable in a course in literary criticism, but it seems advisable to emphasize that children whose reading background, acquaintance, and exposure to books has been quite limited are likely to require sensitive, skilled teaching which modifies the technical expectations set forth in this section and concentrates on building in children a sense of pleasure, even a sense of awe, about the world that can be revealed to them through the words and graphics of books, starting with picture books. The manual fails to stress this important point, perhaps on the assumption that teachers don't need such prompting, or the assumption that students who lack the requisite reading-readiness will be placed in "developmental reading," for which other manuals might apply.

Consequently, one must ask whether the grade designations for these "strategies" should be retained, since little evidence supports a grade level-specific readiness for introducing and reinforcing the processes of reading for critical analysis and evaluation purposes versus reading for aesthetic and personal response. Most first-graders are likely to continue to react to picture books in ways like those listed as objectives in the Monitoring Guide for Literature -- viz., "experience vicariously the situations and events" and "respond creatively," such as

"make up their own stories" in reaction to, or paraphrasing the picture book story.

These reservations about the appropriateness of the strategy recommended for Grades 1-3 are particularly strong when applied to children whose pre-school environment has provided very little exposure to and involvement with the world of books. "Inner" or "central" city children have been described, with some fortunate exceptions, as products of today's essentially oral-aural culture. Exacerbating the handicapping condition for some of them will be the scarcity of school picture books whose subject matter is the people and the happenings they have observed and experienced. Thus, the applicability of this strategy to students in Grades 1-3 must be determined carefully by the individual teacher.

Although READING AND LITERATURE IN THE LANGUAGE ARTS is intended for Grades K-12, the K level is neither accorded a separate coverage for strategy nor included in the model for Grades 1-3. Since many children are likely to need special attention and assistance at this critical beginning point of their journey into the world of books, teachers must have guidance on ways to help those children master the world of words (school). The kindergarten room should have an abundance of picture books, among which should be found, especially in urban schools -- but desirable in all -- those by and about people of the racial/ethnic/cultural mixture represented in New York's school population. In addition, the classrooms must be staffed with teachers capable of, and interested in, <u>arousing</u>

and nurturing those children's interest in and excitement about the world of words and graphics, not merely "monitoring" students' ability to "read for critical analysis," which is the stated purpose of this "monitoring guide for picture books."

The quantity and quality of these basic essentials -- an abundance of attractive picture books and competent teachers to utilize them effectively -- may be quite limited in many urban schools enrolling the largest number of African American students, the chief focus of this study. Critiques of such schools have pointed out glaring and depressing absences of essential teaching/learning materials. For example, Fred M. Hechinger, New York Times specialist on educational affairs, recently described the experiences of one teacher who sought basic teaching materials:

> "'When I got to my classroom...I found nothing except some left-over garbage. Over the first weekend, I spent over $400 of my own money for supplies.' Her request for books produced nothing until well into November, and then none were appropriate."[50]

One might prefer to consider this as an exception to the situation existing in most urban classrooms, but such a head-in-the-sand posture would fly in the face of facts reported in such critical studies as those cited earlier in this section on the Language Arts.

More likely to be available to the teacher is plenty of advice, guidance, and directives for use in structuring and conducting classes. Reading and Literature is no exception: a

35-page segment presents "Strategies for Nurturing the Reading Process in the Classroom." Amply detailed planning guides are set forth for the teachers; each provides not only the purpose, objectives, rationale, and procedures but also the evaluation criteria for assessing the learning outcomes of each "strategy." The researchers found the "strategies" to be pedagogically sound and pragmatic in their applicability to the predominant enrollment. As indicated earlier, however, we believe that teachers of large enrollments of nontraditional students like those who are the subject of this study will have to modify the suggested sequences to devote more time to building the comprehension and expressive levels of those students.

A few examples from the strategy for fostering reading for aesthetic and personal response will illustrate our belief that the writers of Reading and Literature did not amply envision the diversified enrollment almost certain to be found in urban schools serving depressed areas. Consider, first, this selection for a Grade 4-6 "strategy" to demonstrate "predictable language patterns," using a quoted excerpt from Domanska's Spring Is:

> "Spring is showery, flowery,
> bowery. Summer is hoppy,
> poppy, floppy.
> Autumn is wheezy, sneezy,
> freezy.
> Winter is slippy, drippy,
> nippy."

Do these words accurately depict the seasons in the urban areas known by the urban students described above? Are any of the words likely to be unknown, or have other than the intended

meaning? We doubt that these students, coming from tenements, apartments or houses in compacted urban areas, are likely to "see" the same world called to the mind of the traditional teacher by this excerpt. Here, therefore, lies a challenge and an excellent teaching opportunity: the poem should not be bypassed but should be used to make the point that words have no meaning in themselves -- i.e., "meaning" exists in the mind of the user, whether speaker/writer or reader/listener.

Consequently, the creative teacher will guide the students into "composing" their own rhyming description of the seasons in the city. The onus, therefore, is placed on the teacher, with only the most general -- often implicit rather than explicit -- aid from the "manual." If the teacher is amply acquainted with that urban world which the students have experienced, then greater benefit can ensue from using this " inappropriate" piece in an exciting teaching exercise.

How the "world of words" differs from the "real world" can be shown in another example, "TIMES OF DAY":

"Morning is waking up
   washing up
   dressing up.
Noon is eating in
   resting in
   playing in.
Night is dining out
   T.V. out
 sacking out."[51]

Whose world is being depicted here? Does a day in the life of the typical nontraditional urban student, grades 4-6, resemble the one depicted here? Is it relevant to "at risk" students in those schools? Will it incline them to think, if not say, "That

may be your day, but it's not mine." Although most of the poem's words are likely to be understood at once, it is not likely that the referents of those words -- the realities of the "real world" of those nontraditional students' daily existence -- will be a true image of the world that the author had in mind.

What might be the comprehension, the reaction, of these students if the following poem by Langston Hughes, African American poet, had been included to illustrate language patterns?[52]

"CHILDREN'S RHYMES

By what sends
the white kids
I ain't sent;
I know I can't
Be President.
What don't bug
them white kids
sure bugs me:
We know everybody
ain't free.
Lies written down
for white folks
ain't for us a-tall:
Liberty And Justice --
Huh! -- for All?

The point being emphasized is that this publication -- state-issued and designed for use in the most critical curricular area, the language arts -- shows serious shortcomings in regard to use of opportunities to build all students' acquaintance with, and knowledge of, literary works by African American writers. Although the manual uses relatively few specific examples to illustrate the "strategies," we firmly believe that those so used should have included some which help weave "black threads" into

the predominantly "white" fabric of the school curriculum and teaching materials. Such an approach, in our opinion, offers more benefit than the once-per-year focus on Black History Month, when all students are force-fed a dose of "black literature."

Similar opportunities for such infusion appear in practically every "strategy" proposal in this otherwise commendably structured manual for teachers of literature. It could have taken a strong stance in support of team teaching and emphasized the interrelatedness of knowledge -- presently compartmentalized in "subjects" -- by showing how literature and social studies often encompass, but treat differently, the same topics. Consider, for example, the possibilities for enlarging students' comprehension not only of societal problems (racism, prejudice, name-calling) but also creative writing techniques (rhyming, meter, phrasing) by a teaching team approach to this short poem by the African American poet, Countee Cullen:

"INCIDENT

Once riding in Old
Baltimore, Heart-
filled, head-filled
with glee,I saw a
Baltimorean Keep
looking straight at
me.

Now I was eight and
very small, And he
was no whit bigger,
And so I smiled, but
he poked out His
tongue, and called
me, 'Nigger.'

I saw the whole of
BaltimoreFrom May
until December;Of
all the things that
happened there
That's all that I
remember."[53]

To sum up: Reading and Literature in the English Language Arts K-12 provides detailed guidance for the schools' teachers of literature. Its "strategies" have been designed well to meet the educational goals of the Regents -- with one noteworthy exception, in the researchers' view. That exception is the failure to take advantage of an excellent opportunity to support the Regents call for what we have referred to as "multicultural education" -- i.e., to adapt material for appropriateness to the great diversity among the students in New York State schools.

Our special concern is that portion of New York students who are being deservedly referred to as the "at-risk" or the "imperiled" students, primarily the poverty-level minorities in compacted urban areas. The "different" approaches called for in an earlier section of this chapter are nowhere evident in this manual for teachers. Rather, the approaches clearly seem designed for the traditional middleclass students of the predominant enrollment (based on statewide statistics); the goals are similarly aimed at such students. With only general approaches to guide them, the expected educational goals will be attainable in the schools which are the focus of this pilot study only to the extent that creative, informed teachers will search for or develop the materials, the knowledge, the interest, and the commitment to adapt the approaches detailed in the manual to

fit the developed abilities, latent potential, interests, and felt needs of the "at-risk" students.

Almost equally regrettable, for another reason, is the missed opportunity to include the works of African Americans among the examples used to illustrate "strategies". Such use would have supported another goal of the Regents, a multicultural educational experience befitting the diversity among enrolled students and helping to ameliorate the latent bias which is sustaining prejudicial attitudes and behaviors among our students.

A brief look at selected state-issuances designed for multicultural education will be the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

EVALUATION OF SELECTED SUPPLEMENTS

For the most part, the syllabuses reviewed in Chapters III and IV generally lacked the amount and the kind of material we believe to be essential for optimal education of African American and other nontraditional students in urban schools having significant enrollment of "at-risk" students. Consequently, we formulated a number of suggestions for adding teaching material which, we believe, would not only increase the learning competencies of such students by showing them the relevance of "schooling" to their lives and future possibilities but also, at the same time and in the process, enhance their self-reliance, enlarge their self-esteem, and improve their self-image.

We also noted that the syllabuses tend to provide relatively sparse guidance on specific teaching materials which would enable the teachers to fulfill the expectations stated or implicit in the Regents Action Plan to Improve Elementary and Secondary Education Results in New York. (These expectations were discussed in Chapter I of this study.) Some of the gaps in syllabus material related to African American and other minority populations can be filled partially by using certain Department-issued supplementary publications. Those which are most pertinent to this study will now be reviewed.

The Black Perspective

The merit of this supplement for ensuring the inclusion of material about African Americans in courses such as the United States History course reviewed in Chapter III is limited by the narrow scope of topics it contains and the fact that it is "dated," having been published in 1970. Consequently, research and writings subsequent to that date, which, in some cases, have corrected and expanded material about African American history and experiences, could not be reflected in The Black Perspective. As a result, additional supplementation must be undertaken by any teacher who recognizes the need and benefit of doing so.

Our research has identified commercial publications of a similar origin and purpose; several have features which qualify them highly as alternatives to The Black Perspective. Like it, they seem to have been published in response to pressures from students, parents, and public figures in the 1960's to add omitted elements of black history to the school curriculum and correct distortions in materials then being used. One publication similar in format and content (a collection of documents) but far more inclusive than The Black Perspective (including truncated but excellent introductions to each historic period) is Black Protest: History, Documents, and Analyses, 1619 to the Present by Joanne Grant.[54] Perhaps this publication was not known by the Education Department when a group was convened to compile documents and undertake other work leading to publication and issuance of The Black Perspective, or perhaps

other reasons led to the decision to publish rather than acquire a commercial one. At any rate, this inexpensive paperback by Grant is readily usable with the syllabus for U.S. History.

A harsh critique of Black Perspective probably is unfair, given the limited publishing resources of the Department and the intense pressures of the milieu in which it was produced, a time of mounting intensity in protests requiring rapid response and a process of participatory democracy involving minority students and faculty. The "Guide" undoubtedly met a major need then being felt by the schools for material on black history and the black experience in America. Material of this nature, measured in terms of need, was slight in quantity, limited in availability, sometimes weak in quality of content and presentation, and generally "slighted" by instructors -- sometimes due to lack of knowledge, sometimes due to underestimation of the legitimate place deserved by that material. This lack undoubtedly was compounded by attitudinal barriers among textbook writers, publishers, curriculum planners, and, it would appear, given the record, by the Education Department itself.

The pedagogical rationale undergirding The Black Perspective -- study of duplicated "original documents" -- is sound and commendable; key factors in successful outcomes from the approach are teacher interest and available time to allow a "case study" approach. The Guide projects dual outcomes of informing students and shaping their attitudes, but a weakness of the supplement, its narrow focus, will limit the attainment of these laudable goals. Similarly, the positive benefit of using "original"

materials seems likely to be incomplete, due to the absence of related pertinent documents which would provide a fuller perspective and clearer understanding of the publication's major topics: Black Resistance, Reevaluation of Reconstruction, and Racism.

Obtaining optimum outcomes from The Black Perspective will require teacher alertness to find appropriate points at which to infuse its material into the course. Required coverage of other course material is likely to cause difficulty for the inductive case-study approach to using the "original materials" in this supplement. Some of the documents strike the researchers as unnecessarily long for establishing the points intended to be made about the experiences of blacks in America. For example, the detailed material on "Slave Insurrections," while valid proof of black resistance to slavery, will require extensive time. Shortening that material would free time for coverage of such omitted evidence of black resistance as petitions for freedom, the work of black abolitionists, and the contributions of black soldiers (often, escaped slaves) as members of the Union army.

This harsh judgment is aimed more at the promulgators of The Black Perspective than at the team which prepared it. Revision and update should have occurred during its eighteen year history, a period of intense research and writing by scholars of African American (black) history. The choice of topics reflects concerns then being voiced by protesters, who were calling for the schools to teach all students such omitted facts as these: that slaves had strongly resisted enslavement, that many positive

contributions had been made by many blacks during Reconstruction, and that racism was rampant in the country during the 1960's. Effort to address these major concerns are commendable, even if rather late action by an agency which long had been hailed as being in the forefront among educational developers.

The researchers believe that The Black Perspective has material deserving infusion into U. S. History courses, but the supplement should be redesigned for a multiple-point injection process, which the Grade 7-8 Social Studies course will readily accommodate. The following observations are presented to assist those who may revise the supplement or those reviewing publications for alternate use.

1. The readings -- although selected, perhaps, for the edification of the teacher rather than for duplication and use by the students -- lack balance in the views presented. For example, long passages of "slave dialogue" describing treatment by the master (and others) needlessly dwell on minor points such as slaves feigning illness to avoid cruel mistreatment or hard work. Noteworthy by their omission are readings about the plantation hierarchy and related matters which show how slaves adapted, in order to survive, to the duress of being enslaved.
2. A chronological arrangement of the readings, along with a fuller introduction to each major division thereof, would enable greater student comprehension and easier correlation with syllabus material by the teacher. In many instances,

the explanatory "lead-ins" are too brief to be amply helpful.

3. The "cartoons" intended to illustrate shifting attitudes toward blacks are UNIFORMLY "negative" in their depiction of blacks in glaringly stereotyped drawings! While the intent may be positive (to show then-prevailing attitudes?), the result is likely to be a heightening of sensitivities among black students and a reinforcement of any inclination that non-black students may feel to ridicule blacks for their color or other trait -- or assumed trait. Furthermore, one must question whether seventh and eighth grade students have the experience and maturity to view these sophisticated cartoons in the manner expected of Harper's Weekly readers. One must wonder, therefore, why the preparers and consultants responsible for the content of The Black Perspective chose these particular "cartoons" from the alternatives available. At any rate, a change is advisable.
4. One also wonders why the proposed infusion of material on the black perspective has been slated for the Eighth Grade U.S. History course but not for the Seventh Grade course on Our Cultural History. Surely, one heritage from which our society suffers today, racism, is traceable largely to the institution of slavery, which has left an indelible "black mark" not only on United States history but also on its human relations and major socioeconomic aspects evident today and unresolved for our tomorrows. The syllabus for

Cultural Heritage presents numerous openings for infusing material from The Black Perspective or a similar publication. For example, slavery is a natural for the "Colonial Period" and the concept of "race" would be equally suitable for the "Pre-Columbian" topic. Other examples will be easily discerned by the interested and astute teacher-reviewer; some have been given in our review of syllabuses, Chapters III and IV.

5. Research -- and the spotlighting of works apparently ignored by textbook writers -- has documented well a number of major topics which must be included in ANY supplement recommended for use by the schools to infuse black history and black experiences into U.S. History and Culture courses. Some examples: Participation of blacks in the Revolutionary War; importance of blacks as artisans and craftsmen on the plantations and in the labor forces (later displaced by immigrants and barred by racist practices); status of non-slave blacks in America and their role in the abolition movement. The syllabus and Black Perspective list references for teacher use to augment prescribed textbooks and syllabus, but one must wonder whether, given the demands on their time and energy, many teachers will be able to find and use such supplements. Whether they will feel a need or have the interest to do so is another matter for speculation, if what Jim Haskins wrote in 1969, about the time of the publication of The

Black Perspective, is true in most of the "core" or "inner city" schools today. He wrote:

> "I can state with reasonable assurance that black people in the educational systems in this country know the 'system' has failed whites too. It has played a cruel and inhuman joke on them. It has failed to educate them about other humans -- their black brethren. It has distorted the history of the land by being exclusive. Therefore, at the beginning of each school year thousands of white teachers march into ghetto schools armed only with miseducational concepts about their black charges and with Dewey's Philosophy of Education, which does not work any more." (p. 149)[55]

To Haskins' view we would add this observation: The allegation about unprepared white teachers also applies, in many instances, to black teachers hired for the "inner city" schools, since the teacher-preparatory curriculums rarely include, and seldom require, courses in Black history. The mere fact of racial identity is no guarantee of qualification to provide informed instruction about African American history, although their own experiences might have been germane for empathetic and effective interaction with black students and other minorities in their classes.

To summarize: The Black Perspective represents the culmination of a commendable effort by selected teachers, a group of students, their consultants, and Education Department advisers and assistants to meet a demand -- probably with short notice and limited resources. However, it poorly meets needs known today, lacking the range of readings requisite for the coverage warranted by the topic and needed by the students and the teachers. Since it is listed in the 1986 Reprint of the Syllabus for Grade 7-8 Social Studies as an additional resource available from the Education Department, we surmise that it continues to be an officially recommended resource for weaving black threads into the largely all-white fabric of the material in the SYLLABUS for Grades 7 and 8 Social Studies.

In our judgement, this supplement has limited value for today's situation and, as indicated in Chapter III, much of its content could be infused into the syllabuses for Our Cultural Heritage and United States History, Grades 7 and 8, respectively, Doing so would benefit all students. If its use as a separate document is to be continued, then certain of its material must be updated and/or replaced with material more germane to the contemporary situation of African Americans. Teacher input is desirable, in such a revision, to also upgrade its usability in the classroom.

Other supplements issued to assist the curriculum construction and course design processes as they affect African American and/or multicultural topics warrant brief description and discussion.

Black History Month, a long-used supplement, apparently has been passed the test of time. It provides helpful material on African Americans whose achievements have contributed significantly to American life in such fields as economics, social welfare, cultural enrichment, governmental affairs, and education. In many instances, they did so after overcoming major obstacles, so the material about them has image-building value for minority students as well as informational value for all students. Its content merits absorption into appropriate elements of the syllabuses which guide curriculum and course development and presentation. If it is continued as a distinct supplement and resource document, then its factual content should be updated and its format and layout redesigned to facilitate its utilization and improve its attractiveness.

Several Department issuances for multicultural education contain materials pertinent to African American and other minority students. Some of that material could be absorbed into the syllabuses to benefit curriculum and course development.

1. The publication, "A multicultural Early Childhood Guide," has germane material for this purpose.
2. The publication, "Puerto Rican Resource Units", although weak in its content and minimally suitable for optimum use, has some material adaptable for the syllabuses reviewed previously.
3. A specialized publication, "Dance, A Social Study," contains expository material which would dovetail smoothly with some of the material in syllabuses for social studies

courses. In addition, of course, the activities it describes would provide some instruction about African Americans and other minority groups.

4. Even more specialized -- perhaps too much so for much infusion into the reviewed syllabuses -- is the publication, "Learning About Haitians in New York State." However, its material on history and culture deserve placement in those syllabuses.

A final word is called for, we believe. Throughout our discussion of three key syllabuses in the two preceding chapters and during our discussion of the above supplements, we have reiterated our advocacy of infusing material from those supplements into the syllabuses. The rationale for this advocacy may not have emerged clearly, so we repeat it at this point.

We believe that most teachers regard the syllabuses as the paramount document by which they should design and present their courses: The syllabuses not only set the parameters for what they should include in their courses and in what sequence they should present it but also contain much, if not all, of the content on which the students' learning will be tested and the courses evaluated. This attitude, warranted or not, was discussed at some length in Chapter II, so need not be reiterated here.

In such a frame of mind, many teachers are more likely to utilize material which is part of the course syllabus than would do so if that material appeared in a supplement. We make this prediction at this point because we have not seen evidence of the

extent to which teachers may be locating or developing materials on their own to augment textbook and syllabus materials on African American and other minority students. Exciting materials have been developed, and some of them marketed, to help the committed, creative instructor plan and present lessons on our cultural and ethnic heritage.

Some schools have provided funds for teams of teachers and staff of the library or media center to develop multimedia approaches for use in team-teaching, as has been suggested in Chapter III. Our emphasis upon "freeing" teachers is intended not as an attack upon syllabuses per se but as a concern for the "chilling effect" emanating from "reminders" about the risks of departing from the syllabuses, as we discussed in Chapter II.

Chapter VI

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER

The classroom teacher has the paramount role and responsibility in the school's efforts -- through its curricular offerings and activities program--to provide a successful learning experience for African American and other minority students. The Regents' policy issuances, the State Education Department's syllabuses and related instructional guidelines, the school administration's directives, the curriculum coordinator's planning -- none of these bears the weight borne by the classroom teacher in the educational process which will shape these students.

This statement in no way relieves others -- including the guidance personnel in the school, the parent or parents in the home, and others whose role or relationship impinges upon those students -- of their responsibility for setting good examples, urging academic achievement, or being a critical observer of the quality of education provided by the schools. On the contrary: their roles are important -- at times, crucial -- in the educative process. However, in the final analysis, it will be primarily the teacher whose impact upon the minority students -- for better or worse -- will determine their failure or success, the degree of success, and the nature and extent of resultant attitudes toward further learning and ultimate life goals.

This strongly phrased generalization is based upon the belief, well-supported in research findings, that neither syllabus deficiencies (described in chapters III and IV) nor ambiguous directives from the Regents (discussed in Chapter II) will deter the competent and committed teacher from establishing necessary rapport and adapting instruction to meet the learning capabilities of those students. The two conditions, competent and committed, are not easily met nor readily sustained in the teaching milieus many teachers will find in some inner city schools.

Competence implies not only a solid grounding in the fundamentals of instruction and a "working knowledge of subject matter" to be taught but also germane, objective views about those minority students: background factors such as economic level, living conditions, family members and family structure, cultural elements in "home territory". Also needed is established skill in relating to persons who may be unlike the teacher in race, ethnicity, and culture. Also implied is capability, or capacity, for being creative, for "striking out on one's own," when an informed analysis of student progress or lesson success clearly indicates the time has come for innovation, a new direction or a different tact or tactic.

Commitment implies making a conscious decision to see a task to a successful end, to pursue that end in honorable and promising ways, even when the odds appear to be insurmountable. However, following one's commitment does not imply blindly

plunging ahead, obstinately pursuing that predetermined end regardless of evidence saying "turn back."

Do these qualities belong only to "superperson"? Not at all. Research conducted during the "hot streets" period (last half of the 1960's and the first half of the 1970's -- a time of much greater inquiry into the problems of teaching in "inner city" schools than is occurring today) included findings on the qualities needed by these teachers. The challenge facing schools which serve large enrollments of students from diverse subcultures was generally described in that tense period as that of finding ways to enable those students to move successfully into the socioeconomic "mainstream" without serious negative effect upon distinct characteristics of subgroup culture and identity.

Typical of this research is the study by Archibald and Chemers into the "cognitive style" best suited to students from diverse cultures. Specifically, the study "attempted to determine if the traits of flexibility, openness, and sensitivity found in high school teachers would be associated with higher levels of satisfaction among students in general and among minority students in particular." Their finding is instructive:

> "The results...provide relatively strong support for the hypothesis that the openness, flexibility and sensitivity of a teacher's cognitive and perceptual systems can have profound effects on the satisfaction and adjustment of students. These findings apply to both white and non-white students, the

differences between these groups being of degree rather than kind."

In addition, an "interesting,...somewhat unexpected," finding also emerged:

> "...teachers' non-authoritarianism, warmth and openness alone did not result in greater student satisfaction. It was when the warmth and openness were combined with an ability to understand and relate to others...that satisfaction increased."

The researchers reached two conclusions particularly applicable to the communicative style of the teachers for culturally diverse students. The first describes what has been called the "missionary syndrome":

> "The stereotypic portrayal of the missionary is that of one who brings great warmth, concern and individual attention to his charges, but without the ability to understand and accept cultural role expectations as different, relativistic, and acceptable.... In the present study, teachers who were scored as having relatively concrete and authoritarian values and low levels of inter-cultural sensitivity are also likely to define as proper behavior only their own culture's normative role expectations."

The second conclusion provides insight into qualities of the teachers who seemed to relate best with minority students:

> "...the present research indicates that unusual or exceptional patterns of relating to others are not required for successful communication with minority students."[56]

Equally as important as relating to the minority students -- indeed, interwoven into it -- is an expectational attitude and behavior which Clifton R. Wharton, former Chancellor of State University of New York, believes will convince the students that "the teacher expects the student to excel and perform." If this is clear, he adds, the students "will respond much better than if the teacher does not expect them to excel." He illustrated it this way:

> "...(W)e have allowed students and teachers to develop negative aspirations based upon the expectational models (of being "culturally deprived,' 'socially impoverished,' and 'academically disadvantaged'). I have been very intrigued recently by the human settings in which certain kinds of individual aspirational levels are hiked.... Having taught for many years, you occasionally get a great class that is just filled with fantastic students, and you ask yourself, 'Why are they so different?'

Dr. Wharton then cited two specific examples, the Boston Latin School, of which he is a graduate, and the Japanese schools, after which he observed that:

> the whole setting is geared toward achievement, that is the expectational model.... I believe in those great classes

there was a critical mass of very good students who were for each other the expectational model. (In) a group of young Black athletes in basketball, for instance, the expectational model is, 'I've got to excel,' and they respond. I maintain that it may very well be that the human environmental setting and the expectational model may be crucial to the kind of performance, self-image and aspirational level the individual has. (emphasis added)

Dr. Wharton concluded with the statement that research had shown "that even the expectational level of the teachers has influence on the performance of the students."[57]

One ingredient needed by the teacher in the process of establishing a high expectational level for students from culturally diverse backgrounds is a "caring" attitude and behavior that will be evident when teaching/counseling those students. Historian John Hope Franklin, James B. Duke, Professor of History Emeritus at Duke University, saw this as a trait black teachers would bring to the teaching role. In urging black students to prepare themselves to enter the teaching profession, he stated that if the declining numbers of black teachers in the schools continue, "it will mean not only that blacks will drop out of one of the oldest and most honored professions, but also that young blacks will be deprived of the role models and a special kind of caring that are essentially irreplaceable. And the drop-out rate among them will continue." (emphasis added)[58]

The assumption underlying Dr. Franklin's emphasis on black teachers for black students may be statistically sound -- i.e.,

that racial sameness increases the likelihood that the essential quality, a caring attitude toward black children, will be more evident among black teachers than among non-black teachers. However, this will not support a generalization that all black teachers will be more caring about black students, nor does it support an inference that non-black teachers inevitably fail to show that caring attitude and behavior toward black students. On the importance of the caring quality itself -- for all teachers of all students -- there surely is no disagreement.

Another value likely to accrue from having black teachers for black school children is a higher likelihood that essential information about the socio-cultural backgrounds and the probable pre-school learning experiences of those children will be known by black teachers more than by teachers who are non-black. Such a generalization must be qualified, however: racial sameness does not guarantee that the amount of information, and the meaning of that information, will be known better by black teachers than by non-black ones. Furthermore, studies do not show that racial or cultural difference invariably brings ineffective teaching of minority students by non-minority teachers. Rather, many studies show that the essential traits of a caring attitude, a high degree of communicative effectiveness, and the establishment and maintenance of a high expectational level tend to transcend differences of race or culture among teachers.

Differences such as race, culture, or ethnicity do not necessarily make a difference in teacher effectiveness; they can

be "bridged" or negated by the appropriate preparation. The process by which this can be effected was the subject of numerous articles, workshops, and training sessions during the tense 1960's, when such educational ventures as Project Head Start on a national basis, or New York City's More Effective Schools Program, were launched, monitored, analyzed, and their findings disseminated for the edification of school personnel and others. An example germane to the topic of racial difference came from a conference sponsored by the Schools Section, U.S. Office of Education, in 1962. The particularly pertinent presentation, "Personal and Professional Qualifications for Teachers of Culturally Different Youth," includes this germane advice from a well-qualified teacher at Crispus Attucks High School, Indianapolis:

> "The teacher will not have to know all cultures in order to arrive at this stage of ('cultural) disassociation,' but ... will have to become culturally 'sophisticated,' a condition which is fostered by a broad educational experience in that area of anthropology now identified as culture and personality. Through these experiences, the teacher can begin to acquire the attitudes and intellectual commitments which will cause him to be wary of any generalization about what is normal; ... aware of his own value systems; ... capable of entertaining variant value systems and customs without shock or the weakening of his own beliefs; and will produce in him a growing realization...that even where there are strong disagreements,

there are numerous possibilities of cultural accommodation." (emphasis added)[59]

The preparation recommended by Mr. Moore certainly has a convincing rationale underlying it. Whether the teacher-training institutions have adequately prepared their graduates in terms of background understanding of culturally diverse children must be determined by all school systems enrolling large numbers of such students. If teachers lack this preparation, schools must require completion of study which will help them develop that background understanding.

A major problem facing even the "culturally sophisticated" teacher is that of recognizing the learning strengths of the so-called "culturally disadvantaged" students, whose school records typically label them to have a "slow learner" pattern. The usual approach is to lessen the educational demand -- i.e., lower the "expectational level" or "dummy down" (the cynic's label for it) the course content and the teaching approaches. Such handling, notes Henry Levin, Director of the Center for Educational Research at Stanford University,

> "'appears to be both rational and compassionate, but it has exactly the opposite consequences. It stigmatizes them with a mark of inferiority and reduces learning expectations for them and their teachers, and it slows the pace of instruction to a crawl.
>
> The result is a school experience that lacks intrinsic vitality, omits crucial learning skills and reinforcement, and moves at a plodding pace. It is also joyless.'"[60]

Levin urges a different approach which increases the teacher' role, responsibility and accountability. Based on study of successful schools such as the King School in New Haven, Connecticut, his model is the "'accelerated school,'" which is based on the premise that black children <u>have</u> the skills for learning -- often-overlooked skills:

> "'The fact is, these children have tremendous amounts of language. They are incredibly verbal, but not very book oriented. What we have to do is build on their verbal orientation and get them to see decoding as a means of access to the excitement of the printed word....'"[61]

Debates about teaching (pedagogy) have existed through the ages; they continue today. Debate intensifies whenever the schools are in the spotlight for alleged inefficiencies or ineffectiveness -- as noted earlier, during the 1960's and today, such as this pilot study of their effectiveness in educating African American and other minority students. Often targeted in such evaluations are the teachers themselves; they counter with insistence that they need greater freedom to restructure their courses, better working conditions, less "paper work." FOr example, when the federal Office of Education included sharp criticism of teachers in its review, <u>A Nation at Risk</u>, the teachers had their opportunity to file a rejoinder in <u>Report Card on School Reform: The Teachers Speak</u>, published by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. It reported on responses by 13,500 teachers asked to evaluate the effects of reform instigated by the Department of Education critique.

Knowing that teachers' views are vital in any reform effort, the researchers for this pilot study decided to survey a sampling of teachers in New York urban schools to learn their views on the State-issued syllabuses (and related supplements) reviewed in chapters three and four. We seek to determine, among other matters, whether frequent reminders of the fact that state examinations would be based on syllabus content had a "chilling effect" on teacher initiatives such as augmenting syllabus material or departing from its charted pathways to tailor the course differently. We also hope to learn about any methods and materials teachers had developed or acquired to meet the particular needs of culturally diverse students or to more thoroughly inform students about African American history and contributions.

A survey questionnaire was designed by the Project Director and distributed by the New York State African American Institute to randomly-selected teachers of social studies in six urban area of New York. Returns had not been received in sufficient numbers to permit a valid analysis at the submission date for this report. Consequently, the researchers have obtained permission to submit as an Addendum their analysis of the questionnaire results and a commentary on whether teachers' views confirm, refute, or modify the researchers' findings and recommendations, presented in the chapter which follows.

Chapter VII

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This pilot study has examined various related aspects of the educational process as it might be affected by state-issued syllabuses and related instructional materials. The chief concern motivating the study and the research process is the less-than-desirable academic performance of African American and other minority students, primarily those attending schools serving populations in the major metropolitan areas of New York State. These students are now being labeled by terms such as "the imperiled generation" or "the bypassed underclass," or "the nontraditional learners"; concern about them has led to sponsorship of studies by major organizations as well as government at the national, state, and local levels. Some of the results emerging from these studies have been cited in this report.

Before presenting our findings and recommendations, we consider it important to point out that this pilot study is not an exhaustive, in-depth probing of all factors impinging upon and perhaps accounting, in part, for deficiencies in the academic performance of the subject students. Rather, the study concentrated upon the probable effect of selected state-issued instructional guides likely to be used by the schools to design and plan courses, guide instruction and assist teachers. The focal point of our examination was any material describing or

related to the history, culture and contributions of African American and other minorities. We asked: "Is the material accurate?", "Is it adequate?" and "Is it appropriate?" Where deficiencies in document content were discovered, we researched the topic and located material which we suggested for infusion into the document. These suggestions are not intended to be definitive but to illustrate a process which we believe and heighten the goals of minority students by acquainting them with positive attainments of their people and providing role models. In this particular undertaking, we had in mind the documented value of an elevated self-esteem for fostering a higher level of academic attainment.

But our examination into the effect of the documents had also to look critically at the user of those documents, the teacher, whose role in determining the level of academic attainment by students is paramount. Believing that defects in the issued instructional documents could be overcome by teacher actions to augment material therein, we had to query the preparation and commitment of those teachers. Since the teacher must be prepared, by formal training and experience, to adapt and supplement this material to meet the learning needs of the diversified student enrollment, we compiled material describing desired qualities of teachers who work with "the imperiled generation" in urban schools. Without doubt, the academic performance of those students -- who differed markedly in culture, race, or ethnicity from students comprising the predominant enrollment on a statewide basis -- could be adversely

affected by either the material provided in the state issuance or the school personnel's use of it.

This research process required the examination of ample literature on the instructional process, the teachers, the school and classroom ambience, the nontraditional students themselves, and other factors having potential for impacting those students' academic performance. The literature was plentiful, due heavily to the fact that extensive research into the subject had occurred a decade or two earlier than the current rebirth of concern among those who postulate that the worsening socioeconomic plight of minorities in depressed areas is due largely to educational deficiencies.

Findings which the researchers believe have clearly emerged during this study will now be delineated. With each will be presented a commentary and one or more recommendations for consideration by the study's sponsors and others who may find it prudent and worthwhile to act on the basis of the recommendations. The findings will be presented in a numbered order which coincides closely with the topics and subtopics in the study itself. Consequently, no attempt will be made to array them in any order or priority.

Finding 1: The state-issued documents examined in this study do appear to have some "chilling effect" on instruction, adversely impacting African American and other minority, nontraditional students.

Comments: This finding must be labeled "tentative," since the study cannot present evidence based upon a field-verified test. Such a test would use matched groups of students (i.e., equal in academic ability) taught by the same instructor, using identical materials in identical settings. Such a test would be difficult to establish and control for variables; it would not verify the hypothesis that the syllabuses, for example, did indeed have a "chilling effect" on teaching and learning unless the teacher followed the syllabus exactly with one class, then augmented or ignored syllabus content whenever doing so seemed warranted. Thus, the key element would be teacher judgment, which, the researchers believe, can be relied upon far more frequently than seems to be the belief of the syllabus writers.

The preceding statement leads naturally to the question of why the researchers have presented this finding if no in-school test has confirmed it. The finding represents our objective conclusion that the instructional staff will feel some "chilling effect" when they learn that the enrollments they must teach present a reality that is little evident in the content of state-issued documents. Those documents are largely devoid of specific material clearly showing the implications of massive demographic changes that have brought greatly enlarged enrollment of students who differ markedly in cultural background, school readiness, race, ethnicity, motivation, aspirations, and expectations from

the populations previously enrolled in those schools or taught by those teachers. Not only are the students unlike those of the past: the school and societal context impacting those schools also has changed -- depressingly so and rarely toward a better status.

Instead of reflecting the scope and effect of this change, the substance and tone of syllabuses examined for this study are closer to vintage 1958. As a result, teachers receive inadequate guidance in syllabuses and supplements on modifications and adaptations which will enhance their chances of successfully teaching this diversified enrollment. We believe that a "chilling effect" results from this deficiency in the issuances.

Further chilling effect is likely to be felt by those teachers who, in spite of the paucity of assistance on problems related to diversified enrollment, decide to undertake a creative, innovative departure from the syllabus. Frequently-repeated reminders of the ill effect which may ensure (failure to cover expected material, poor student performance on statewide examinations, etc.) surely will "chill" some urges to venture a field from syllabus grounds.

Similarly, absence of warranted and needed assistance tailored to learning needs of the diversified enrollment is likely to be seen as "sending a signal" -- undoubtedly, we believe, an inadvertent one -- that the enrollment changes do not represent a difference which "makes a difference" in

course content, methods, or materials. Those teachers who welcome such a signal because they prefer (like Miniver Cheevy) "the days of yore," will be abetted in their actions to "chill" the ambitions and energies of fellow teachers who show determination to ensure that the minority students do achieve academic success.

Finally, the majority of studies of schools in which such students succeed in spite of the odds being against them document unquestionably the value and importance of maintaining a tone which says, in no uncertain terms, high expectational levels here. Examined syllabuses and the Regents Action Plan do present such a tone -- but clearly focusing on the well-prepared traditional student, to be taught by traditionally-prepared teachers who will use traditional materials and methods. What is needed to help teachers of "the imperiled generation" is syllabus material which forthrightly underscores not only the importance of setting and maintaining a high expectational tone during the counseling and instructing of less-well-prepared, diversified, non-traditional enrollments but also providing exemplary instructional guidance to help the teachers do so.

Recommendations:

1. The Commissioner of Education should be urged to assign to appropriate officers of the State Education Department responsibility for an expedited revision of The Regents

Action Plan, the syllabuses, and related instructional supplements. Revisions should describe the demographic changes alluded to in this study, the diversified enrollment resulting therefrom, and the implications ensuing for curriculum and course content, teaching methods, teaching goals, teaching materials, and related matters.

2. The Commissioner of Education should be urged to convene a panel of master teachers with records of successful, exemplary teaching in schools serving large numbers of nontraditional students. That panel should be assigned the task of preparing an advisory issuance which describes, in concrete terms and with abundant examples, teaching methods and materials which help establish and maintain a high expectational tone in the classroom. The resulting document should be approved by the Regents as an adjunct to their Action Plan for Improving New York Schools. Issuance should be statewide.

Finding 2: The content of syllabuses for Grades 7 & 8 Social Studies and The Language Arts K-12 -- critical subject areas in the school curriculum -- fails to reflect up-to-date information about African American and other minority populations. They also fail to capitalize upon many opportunities to infuse facts about the experiences, history and contributions of those populations to the

extent warranted by the learning needs not only of minority students but others as well.

Comments: The importance of teaching children from a perspective they will recognize and relate to is so fundamental, and, therefore, should be so well established and accepted, that further explication here should be unnecessary, perhaps even insulting to the informed reader. Accepted by all educators is the dictum that the unknown is best learned when presented in terms of the known. It should be unnecessary, therefore, to point out that influx into schools of a larger proportion of students who bring learning backgrounds and learning styles significantly different -- in degree, if not in kind -- from those of preceding enrollments calls for congruent changes in the teaching methods, teaching materials, and course design and timetable.

However, results of numerous studies of the schools and the students who comprise the central subject of this study have made clear some surprising shortcomings among teachers when such students appear in their classes. For example, some "master teachers" suddenly lose their ability to effectively teach this new enrollment; many teachers previously lauded for their ability to establish rapport with their students suddenly "block" when faced by students whose responses don't follow patterns like those they could readily interpret and build upon -- even control. Those studies show a glaring need for teachers better prepared to

be effective in the schools serving the "imperiled generation."

Recommendations:

1. The Commissioner of Education should call on all teacher-counselor preparatory institutions to require, as part of the pre-certification education and training, at least one semester-long course describing essential, learning-related, characteristics (culture, background, experiences, contributions, aspirations, etc.) of all ethnic/racial groupings whose children enroll in New York schools. Failure to institute this requirements should bring suspension of Regents approval of the teacher-preparation program.
2. The Commissioner of Education should call on all school superintendents to ensure that each school include in teacher/counselor orientation programs, as a minimum, an intensive one-day workshop on the learning-related characteristics of student groupings enrolling in the school.
3. The Commissioner of Education should ensure that teacher certification examinations test the extent to which examinees possess ample and accurate information about, and positive attitudes toward, the minority populations whose children are likely to enroll in New York schools.

Finding 3: The state syllabuses and supplements sometimes list textbooks or other references to assist the teachers in preparing course content or instruction. Based on their dates and titles, many such listings seem likely to be as devoid of material reflecting the demographic changes, and the import thereof, which have impacted some schools as were the examined state syllabuses and supplements.

Comments: Any teaching staff needing assistance to further augment the issued material should have the state's assistance in the process. This represents an excellent opportunity to ensure that any sources used will reflect the realities of the school situation. For teachers in the schools which have been the focus of this study, this requires a search for relatively scarce materials -- in proportion to other sources which are replete with material befitting a traditional school situation.

Recommendation:

The Commissioner of Education should assign to the appropriate officer of the State Education Department responsibility for (a) surveying the publishers' offerings for those particularly aimed at the urban schools described in this study; (b) collecting and evaluating those publications; and (c) promulgating to the schools a list of publications found likely to be of greatest use to the schools' curriculum coordinator, instructional staff, and administration.

Finding 4: State issuances were found to lack significant amounts of up-to-date material about African American and other minority populations -- their history, experiences, culture, and contributions. The task of updating those documents to reflect verified findings calls for specialists.

Comments: The researchers have included in their review of syllabuses numerous suggestions for improving content as it regards African American. The noted omissions of factual material, the suggested topics for classroom activity or other work by students are neither exhaustive nor meant to be definitive. We believe our suggestions have ample basis in verified research.

However, far more needs to be done to ensure that the state's instructional issuances are as accurate and complete as possible in their presentations about African Americans and other minority groups in New York. Such work is the proper domain of specialists. In addition, what is presented as updated material still must be appropriate to the various ages and grade levels. Also requiring consideration is the "teachability" of the suggested material.

Recommendation:

The Commissioner of Education should form a "blue ribbon task force" of scholars and master teachers to examine the current syllabuses and prepare revised editions which

incorporate up-to-date material about the minority populations found in New York. The scholars must have a command not only of the subject area -- U.S. history, for example, or American literature -- but also intimate knowledge of the minority populations alluded to above. The master teachers would be responsible for ensuring that the suggested changes are "teachable" and appropriate for the grade level and the age level of the students.

Finding 5: Teachers in New York schools serving large numbers of minority students -- and perhaps teachers in other New York schools who are committed to ensuring that all students learn about minority populations -- are likely to have located or developed materials to fill the observed gaps in the state issuances.

Comments: It seems inevitable that a significant number of such teachers share the researchers' disappointment at the paucity of syllabus material which presents accurate, current, objective material about these minority groups. It also seems likely that many textbooks will have been found to be just as inadequate in this regard. We think it likely, as well, that some teachers, perhaps with assistance from the media center and library, have developed germane, exciting material to instruct students about minority populations. Some of this material, we surmise, will prove to be of such exemplary nature as to warrant replication and distribution to other New York

schools -- some of it, indeed, may be worthy of publication by the State Education Department.

Recommendation:

The Commissioner of Education should assign to the appropriate office the task of designing and announcing a competition for the most exemplary materials (project, teaching aid, etc.) produced and successfully used by teachers to instruct students, at any grade level, about New York's minority populations or some aspect of minority experiences and contributions. Suitable awards should be given, including the possibility of statewide promulgation and use.

Finding 6: Our research found abundant evidence that early intervention and assistance eases the schools' teaching burden and enhances the chances for successful academic performance by otherwise poorly prepared students.

Comments: Special programs such as Project Head Start, initiated in the 1960's, have provided ample evidence to prove that appropriately designed learning experiences can fill wide gaps in pre-school learning for children. Experimental preschool and kindergarten operations, many of them based at universities such as Yale and Michigan, had documented the payoff of early structured learning, generally serving primarily the children of faculty and others from professional parents. Project Head Start and similar programs expanded this preschool effort to include children of the poor -- usually referred to in the 1960's

as programs for the "culturally disadvantaged" or the "culturally deprived." Views differed widely on the lasting effects of such early intervention, but subsequent reviews of the research data tend to support those who insisted that such intervention not only helped the children and their parents but also helped the schools as well.

The researchers reviewed many of the research reports and concluded that such early intervention does pay a dividend for the schools. We believe that such action will prove to be cost-effective in that the schools' remedial program costs will be lessened and the learning progress of the students will be less delayed. Greater familiarity with the world of words and with the structured educational processes and procedures of the school will ease the transition for children from homes lacking school-readiness activities and materials.

Recommendations:

1. The Commissioner of Education should encourage schools to form alliances with preschool programs in their vicinity, furnishing learning materials and professional expertise to those programs.
2. The Commissioner of Education should encourage schools to make available to parents of children in the so-called "inner city" packets of material suitable for use by parents or older siblings to introduce to prospective

school enrollees such basic concepts as word recognition, relationship of words to pictures, and communicating in complete sentences -- in short, to approach the plateau which has been reached by the more traditional beginning student.

Finding 7: Greater attention needs to be given to structured learning and informal activities aimed at ensuring the possession of essential information about -- and, possibly, positive attitudes toward -- persons who differ in race, ethnicity, culture, or background.

Comments: Interest in what some educational leaders referred to as "the new pluralism" surged during the 1970's. One outcome was the enlargement of programs in "multicultural education." The optimism and enthusiasm of some advocates of this educational development declined as it became apparent that our multicultural society was beset by intergroup strife and other dynamics far more complex that had been foreseen.

In view of recent confrontations between and among groups, at times reaching into our school and onto our college and university campuses, we believe that a revitalization of structured multicultural education is warranted by the evidence that blatant behavior is on the increase among younger students. We do not attach to the schools an undue share of blame for the increase in attacks apparently due to racial, ethnic, religious, or cultural difference; nor are we naive about the likelihood that a curricular

approach will markedly affect behavior caused by forces external to the school. However, we believe that multicultural educational efforts were launched with unrealistically high expectations that biased attitudes and behavior would be swept aside by learning about the commonality linking people together about the differences that set them apart.

Recommendation:

The Commissioner of Education should be urged to examine the present status of multicultural education in the schools and the extent to which the State Education Department is guiding and assisting the schools in providing multicultural programs and activities which build healthy self-images in the students and inform them objectively and positively about the realities of group identity and ethnic/racial/cultural group life in America.

Finding 8: Areas examined by this pilot study at a relatively shallow level have educational implications which make those areas candidates for deeper study.

Comments: The aim of a pilot study is to explore an area at a level sufficiently deep to reach fertile ground and carry out the specific goal of the study. In this particular pilot study, we closely scrutinized state-issued syllabuses in key school subject areas as a means of evaluating the impact of those syllabuses on instruction. At this point in our research, we have tentatively accepted

the hypothesis that the syllabuses indeed have what we have called a "chilling effect" on teacher initiative and creativity. We firmly believe that this will be especially true among teachers with relatively little teaching experience and less sophistication in ways to meet the system's demands adequately but veer from the directed paths at times.

Inevitably, our research reading took us into tangential but critically important areas. For example, we collected information about innovative teaching approaches and organizational reshapings which appear to be greatly enhancing the success record of some "inner city" schools. We also found exciting new or revised analyses of how students learn, including a number which challenge long-held beliefs about the incapacity of black students, to cite one group, for successfully learning abstract ideas expressed in verbal or mathematical symbols. Arguments about the efficacy and appropriateness of "Black English" were reviewed for their logical structure and sufficiency of evidence.

Given the fact that the percentage of minority students in the schools is predicted to continue to rise, and given the projection that the major source of new workers to keep our economy viable and vigorous also must come from the ranks of these minority students, further research into educational programs aimed at increasing the academic achievement of more minority students would be warranted

even without warning flags and cries of alarm in such reports as A Nation at Risk, The Imperiled Generation, or The Forgotten Half. We have noted with commendation the initiation of experimental instructional programs in a small number of New York schools.

Recommendation:

The Commissioner of Education should direct appropriate officers of the State Education Department to collect information on educational efforts now being made around the nation to enhance academic achievement by minority students at all grade levels. The Commissioner also should invite New York schools to propose research projects which will utilize the school as laboratory for similar purposes. Departmental funds should be earmarked to support promising projects.

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Mindful of the possibility that our research-derived conclusions might not coincide with those of the classroom teachers who have used the state-issued syllabuses and related issuances, the researchers have underway a survey of provided as an "Addendum" to this report. It will included findings that emerge from weighing their views against those reached by the research team.

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